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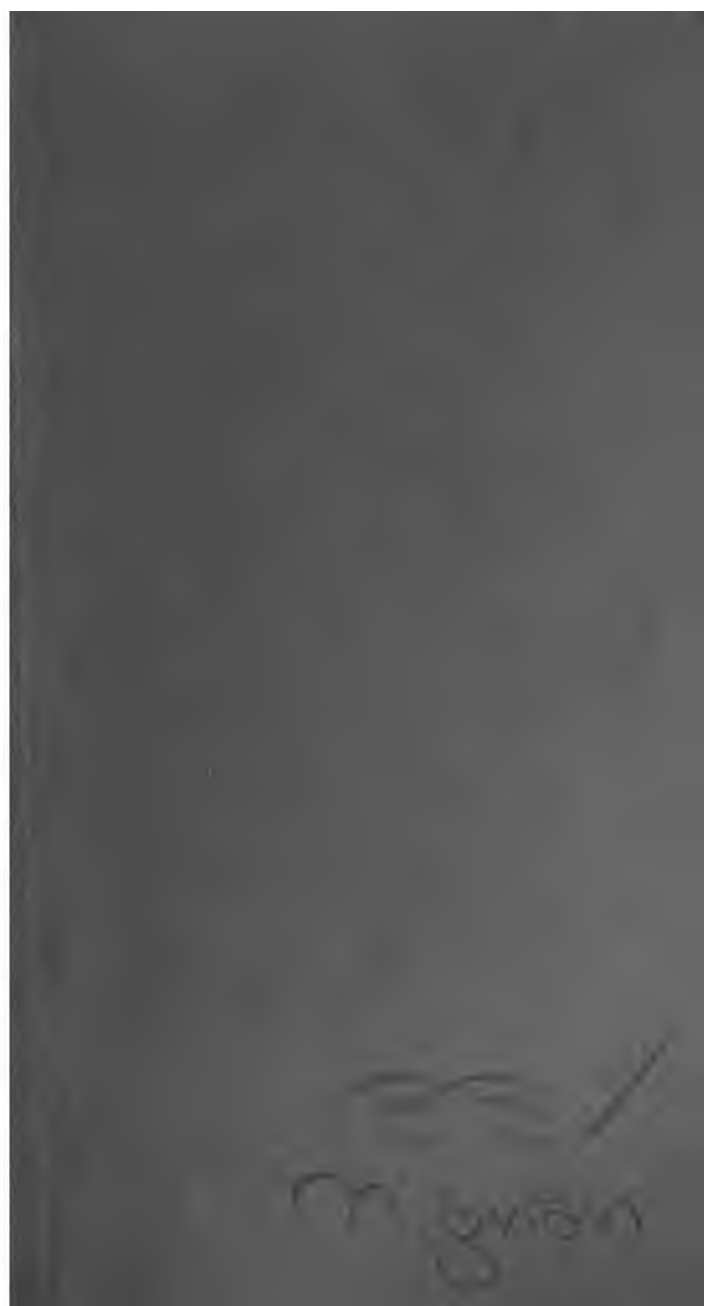
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A
WINTER JOURNEY
THROUGH
RUSSIA, THE CAUCASIAN ALPS,
AND GEORGIA;
THENCE
ACROSS MOUNT ZAGROS, BY THE PASS OF XENOPHON
AND THE TEN THOUSAND GREEKS, INTO
KOORDISTAUN.

By CAPTAIN R. MIGNAN,
OF THE BOMBAY ARMY, M.R.A.S.
AUTHOR OF "TRAVELS IN CHALDEA."

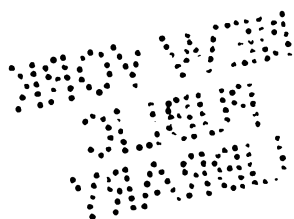
IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET,
Publisher in ordinary to Her Majesty.

1839.



TO
HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF ROXBURGHE,
&c. &c. &c.
AS
A TOKEN OF THE HIGHEST RESPECT,
THESE VOLUMES
ARE, WITH PERMISSION, DEDICATED,
BY
HIS GRACE'S OBLIGED AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

A JOURNEY through Russia, and over the Caucasian Alps into Koordistaun, during the very depth of winter, has not I believe been often accomplished.

At the hospitable palace of Prince Galitzin, Governor-general of Moscow, I had the good fortune to meet the Baron Humboldt just as that philosophic traveller had returned from his highly interesting journey to the Ural mountains; and by his suggestion I resolved to pass through those unfrequented provinces lying on the western shore of the Caspian, formerly tributary to Persia, but more recently ceded to Russia, and now forming a part of that huge empire. Thence I struck into Koordistaun, a country which,

although entrenched within the two most powerful monarchies of the east, still preserves the impress of distinct nationality.

All classical authors have given to Koordistaun the name of "Carducia," and the illustrious Rennell considered it to represent that portion of Assyria which Scriptural History has denominated "Kir." Turkey and Persia claim dominion over some parts of Koordistaun; but this is mere pretence, the Koords being nothing more than the allies of those kingdoms when circumstances induce them to furnish cavalry for defence or aggression, and happy are they to profit by their heroism when thus led into the field of plunder.

The indifference hitherto felt towards the Koords, has prevented our giving any attention to their domestic state, an acquaintance with which can alone enable us to estimate the condition of this people. And yet, if a race has preserved in the very centre of two

such powerful and despotic states, its thorough independence, it is extraordinary (though remoteness and insecurity may have interposed many difficulties) that the people still continue so imperfectly known, more particularly as Koordistaun has been the theatre of some of the most important events that history has chronicled. The retreat of the ten thousand Greeks under Xenophon, after the defeat and death of Cyrus, at the battle which overthrew the Persian Empire, bears ample testimony to the unyielding spirit of the Koords, who remain unchanged to this very day.

In the greater portion of these volumes, I have endeavoured to delineate what appeared to be worthy of notice on my visit to Koordistaun, and the appearance of the work at a time when so much attention is directed towards the Eastern horizon, may, perhaps, render it interesting to the public.

R. M.

LONDON,
January 1st, 1839.

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A

WINTER JOURNEY,

TO

KOORDISTAUN.

CHAPTER I.

Hamburgh—The “George the Fourth” Steam-boat—Prince Khosrou Mirza, the Persian Envoy—Massacre of M. Gribeyadoff—Botanic Garden at St. Petersburg—Russian Police—General Bibikoff—Baron Humboldt—Mr. Rowan—Departure of the Persian Prince—Sledge-travelling—A Russian Belle—Gaiety of Prince Khosrou—His splendid Dagger—Magnificent Presents of the Emperor Nicholas—The Don Cossacks—Their furious driving—A Persian Roué—Persian Sweetmeats.

I LEFT England in the autumn of the year 1829, on my return to my military duties in Western India, by the way of Russia, accompanied by my lady, our two children, and servants; and, after a very rough passage across the North Sea, in one of the smallest steamers belonging to the General Steam Navigation Company of Lon-

don, we entered the Elbe, and were safely landed in the good town of Hamburgh, in about seventy-two hours from London Bridge. We sojourned at the Hotel Belvidere for two days, when Mrs. Mignan's relative, Mr. Charles Parish, having obligingly given us the use of his carriage and box at the Opera, we were afforded the opportunity of witnessing the performance of Deshayes' celebrated ballet of "Masaniello, the fisherman of Naples."

Winter being on the advance, we were compelled to be particular in timing our departure hence, so as to reach Lubeck and Travemunde at the moment fixed by Captain Black for the sailing of his steamer, the "George the Fourth," it being her last trip for the season.

The road over which we travelled to the shores of the Baltic would have tried the patience and talents of Macadam to a greater degree than any piece of ground throughout the whole of Europe: the springs of our britzka must have been of the finest *matériel* and workmanship, or they would inevitably

have failed us, for my flute (one of Charles Nicholson's best instruments) was split asunder from the ill usage it sustained, although carefully bound, and packed within the lid of my portmanteau.

The "George the Fourth" was decidedly the finest steamer on which I ever embarked, not excepting the splendid "Berenice" of Bombay; and with her engines of immense power, was calculated in a superlative degree, to buffet the tempestuous weather usually met with in such high latitudes. We averaged daily two hundred and twenty miles by the log, which soon brought us alongside the English street, bordering that *fluvius fluviorum*, the magnificent Neva.

Through the kindness of Lord Heytesbury, our ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburg, to whom I conveyed letters of introduction from his Lordship's relatives in England, I heard that the Persian Prince Khosrou Mirza, the envoy extraordinary from the Shah of Persia to the Emperor of "all the Russias," was on the eve of re-

turning to Teheraun. I immediately resolved to solicit permission to accompany his excellency, which solicitation was speedily granted through the medium of our fellow traveller Doctor Cormick, who held the appointment of principal physician to his royal highness Abbas Mirza.

Prince Khosrou was the fifth son of Abbas Mirza, by a Khoi woman of inferior rank and family in Persia. He was about three-and-twenty years of age, of middle stature, and, like all Persians, possessed great *politesse Française*, and much sprightliness and *naïveté* in conversation. Futteh-Ali-Shah, his august grandfather, had selected him from among at least fifty other young princes, to conduct a most difficult mission, in which he succeeded to a miracle. He was directed to soften the exasperation, and to explain away the causes, which led to the barbarous massacre of M. Gribeyadoff, the Russian ambassador extraordinary, at the court of his Persian Majesty, and, save one solitary individual, (Monsieur Maltzoff),

his whole retinue. This awful and tragical occurrence happened at Teheraun in February, 1829. His Majesty of Persia was nearly being added to the number of victims, in his zeal to save the Ambassador, and his endeavours to appease the fury of the populace. M. Gribeyadoff had sheltered a Georgian woman, who claimed his protection on the plea of being a native of a country now under the domination of Russia. Her husband (a Persian) had threatened to put her to death, suspecting she carried on an intrigue with a Christian attached to the Embassy. The case had been investigated by the Kazi, who pronounced the woman "guilty," and the infuriated husband having unsuccessfully demanded his wife, excited the inhabitants of the city, who rushed forth exclaiming, "Are these Christian dogs to be allowed to spit on our beards, and defile our women also?" They to a man rushed to the envoy's residence, and in a few minutes not one stone was left standing upon another!

On the 21st of October we landed on the

noble quay, called, *par excellence*, the "English Quay" of the "Imperial Residence" of St. Petersburg. The first fall of snow had occurred that morning—no very agreeable circumstance for us, that winter had actually set in the very day of our arrival in a country through which we had so long a journey to perform. As the choice of carriages at Moscow was greater than in St. Petersburg, and the prices in the former city much less than the latter, our excellent consul-general, Sir Daniel Bayley, advised us to delay suiting ourselves with one until we should arrive there; so we engaged the whole of the mail-coach for the sum of seven hundred roubles, or twenty pounds sterling.

Previously to our quitting St. Petersburg, we visited the magnificent botanic garden with Lady Bayley, which is under the superintendence of Dr. Fischer, to whom I conveyed introductory letters from my most esteemed friend Mr. Lambert, of Boyton, one of the most eminent botanists in Europe. The conservatory extended nearly four thousand

feet in length, and we actually walked for three quarters of a mile under glass. We saw a collection of ten thousand species, which comprised nearly sixty thousand specimens of southern plants. The banana (*Musa paradasiaca*) had attained the height of fourteen feet, and the *Hedysarum gyrans* was of considerable size. Dr. Fischer told me that one cactus (*cactus melonoeidea*) had cost forty pounds, and that the government had been most liberal in all their purchases. It was curious to see the whole vegetable world of the equator transferred to the polar circle, and blooming in luxuriance amidst the ice and snows of this inhospitable climate.

We found the mode of travelling sufficiently expeditious, but the filth at the inns baffles all description. It was utterly impossible to pick one's footsteps through the passages of any one of them.

Our surprise was great to find that wherever we stopped, either to change horses, or to obtain refreshment, the same carriage met

our view; in fact, the whole way from St. Petersburg to Moscow, this self-same carriage was either "close a-head or a-stern of us." At the last stage, however, of our journey, while at breakfast, the hitherto unseen occupant of the calèche introduced himself to my lady, and entered into a conversation on general subjects in French, requesting permission to call upon us at Moscow, to which we of course assented, not knowing how, or why to refuse him. The following morning our new acquaintance had little difficulty in finding out our residence, as we "put up" at the only good English establishment there, kept by a Mrs. Howard, who, upon the mysterious stranger taking his departure, came hastily into our sitting-room quite pale, and tremblingly exclaimed—

"Do you know who Général Bibikoff is?" Our reply was of course in the negative. "He is no less a personage," she added, "than the head of the secret police; indeed, I never thought I should have seen him in my house—I feel quite alarmed!" We entered

into the poor woman's feelings, who could not have spent so many years in Russia without entertaining a dread, and even a horror, of every thing connected with a "secret police."

On the morrow, General Bibikoff called again, and made a still longer stay, being much interested in the causes which could induce us to undertake such a perilous journey at so inclement a season; when, as he remarked, he did not believe there was one Russian family in the empire who would risk it, and he concluded by gallantly offering to escort us to Tiflis! His numerous questions and curiosity were answered by simple fact, to which, nevertheless, he, with all his *galanterie* and *politesse*, could not disguise his incredulity; for the idea, of a lady with two such very young children voluntarily enduring such fatigues and privations, without an adequate object in view, was, as he himself expressed it, the most extraordinary thing he had ever heard of, knowing, as he said he did, that we had

such beautiful ships to take us to India, with every comfort for ladies and children.

Upon his third visit, feeling that the great interest he expressed for us was not at all desirable, I fear I evinced too much John Bullism in my manner towards him; at least, my wife declared I had growled like a dog when displeased with those about him. It appears he then pursued the course which in the first instance he should have done; namely, inquired of Prince Galitzin, the governor-general, if he knew the object that brought us in contact with the Persian envoy. He, I imagine, must have given him the most satisfactory reply to his queries, for we were never afterwards troubled with his presence. If we had not had letters of introduction to Prince Galitzin, it is more than probable, from these circumstances, that our progress through Russia would have been summarily stopped, as that of my acquaintance General, then Major Bacon; and all this, too, from the suspicion, on the part of the Czar's government, of the

object of my connexion with the prince's party; the more especially as we travelled with his father's (Abbas Mirza) physician, Mr. Cormick, who had only left him at St. Petersburg, for a fortnight's visit to London.

At the palace of the governor-general, we had the good fortune to meet the illustrious Humboldt, who had just returned from his travels to the Ural mountains, and was now on his way to Berlin. He spoke of the desire he felt of visiting Persia and ancient Babylonia, but hinted that the King of Prussia was averse to his wandering in climes so far distant at present. Previously to quitting Moscow, he gave an outline of his recent journey at the public university in that city.

The oldest British resident here, was Mr. Rowan, who treated the eccentric Captain Cochrane with such kindness when he passed hence, on his way to Siberia. Mr. Rowan had a vivid remembrance of Napoleon's entry into the city in 1812. In fact, some of the Emperor's staff officers were billeted on him; and to this day he favours his

visitors with a sight of various official records which they, in the hurry of retreat, left behind them.

During our stay in this ancient and interesting capital, our dinner was daily dressed in the kitchen of the most celebrated of all its sovereigns. This is a fact: for Mrs. Howard's house had been a private residence of the Emperor Paul, and the kitchen had never been altered from the time it belonged to royalty, but stood a memorial of the rudeness of the age in which it was built.

The time now drew near for Khosrou Mirza's departure: General Baron Rennenkampff had been appointed his mehmaundar* by the Emperor Nicholas, with orders for relays of horses, of no less a number than four hundred, at every post-house throughout the whole line of road towards Tiflis. To effect a compliance with this order, several military couriers proceeded in advance, and the whole

* Literally, an attendant on a guest. An officer appointed by a government to attend upon strangers while travelling.

suite were provided with handsome chariots, dormeuses, berlines, and calèches; even the servants were supplied with britzkas and telegas. We bought for seven hundred and fifty roubles, one large enough to hold a mattrass; it was made in three parts by a canny Scotchman, whose taciturnity used to amuse us, and who doubtless had the old saying in his mind, that "walls have ears;" for he pretended an utter ignorance of every thing regarding the government and the country, although he had resided in Russia for eighteen years.

The winter of 1829 was unusually severe. We experienced a frost of from twelve to fifteen degrees during our whole stay at Moscow, with every indication of a still greater increase. The snow lay so deep, that long before we reached Tula, we were obliged to unship our carriage-wheels, and travel *en traineau*. At whatever town we halted, the most obsequious attentions were lavished on the young envoy, and whenever he alighted from his carriage to partake of

any refreshment, carpets were laid across the streets and passages, and the rooms he entered were hung with flags, garlands, and flowers. A crowned head could not have received greater homage from a devoted people.

We glided smoothly and swiftly over the snow at a railway speed, declaring our conviction that sledge-travelling was the pleasantest thing in the world. Our "isoostchick" or driver, evidently entertained the same opinion, for he chatted and shouted to his steeds as they galloped up and down the steepest hills, until, in our descent of one with the velocity of lightning, we suddenly found ourselves rolling over and over towards a steep break-neck precipice, that lay in a most convenient position for the performance of a romantic feat. On recovering from so unexpected a shock, we descried the box-seat of our unfortunate britzka, rolling most unwillingly upon its fore axle towards the next post-house with all the rapidity which four infuriated steeds could employ; and we

might have been left to find the best of our way to Voronitz on foot, had not one of the general's couriers from the rear most charitably lent a helping hand to us in our distress..

Arriving at Voronitz, the governor-general, Astrikass, received the prince into his own palace, and entertained him at a ball and supper, to which most of the officers cantoned in the town, with their families, were invited. The prince had little reason to think much of the beauty of the Voronitz belles; for, of the whole assemblage, *one* only possessed any pretensions to good looks, and she was *passée*. This pretty coquette had formerly been a great favourite with the Emperor Alexander, but was now transformed into the faithful wife of a major of hussars, who considered himself in high luck to be so well yoked. She wore a handsome gold chain, long pendant brilliants, and a complete stomacher of diamonds, the gift of her late royal lover. Her countenance was impressively winning, with round dimpled cheeks, that made the

black eyes of many of our Persian friends sparkle with pleasure.

By this time Khosrou Mirza had completely discarded all those prejudices which Asiatics in general, and Mahommedans in particular, entertain with respect to an unreserved association with women in public, and which, on his first entry into Russia, he entertained in a superlative degree. He had now become a tolerable French scholar—excelled in small talk—*polonaised* with the ladies—and greatly delighted in all those lively French games of which the Russians are so fond; as, for instance, *Le Chat et la Souris*, and “*The ring and the silken cord* ;” these two were his especial favourites, because they were very noisy and full of fun. It was, indeed, a strange sight to see such a motley group,—princes with their ladies—field-mars-hals with their mustachioed aides-de-camp—generals with the majors of brigade—Persian khans with their long flowing robes, bushy beards, and grave and fierce looks—all romping together with the glee of children.

At the supper-table, the rich mounting of the prince's handsome dagger became an object of curiosity from its resplendent brilliancy. His excellency perceiving this, politely unfastened the string of pearls that confined it to his shawl-encircled waist, and handed it about for inspection. Each lady expressed greater admiration than the last, until it came round to Mrs. Mignan, who sat just opposite him, and who, examining the blade first, which was of fine Damascus steel, called forth from the prince an exclamation of the strongest delight. He declared he had never before seen a lady who knew how much more valuable good steel was than gaudy ornaments; and he added, "She deserves to have been born a man"—an opinion, to European ears, not very flattering; but to those well acquainted with the Eastern prejudices of women having no souls, &c., the greatest compliment that could be paid.

The young prince spoke in the warmest terms of the emperor's munificence to himself

and suite, and of the liberality and splendour with which he had been treated. In proof of this, he one evening desired his jewels to be brought into the drawing-room, when he displayed two imperial eagles spreading out their wings to the extent of eight inches, and entirely composed of diamonds. They had been made at the express command of the autocrat ; one to be suspended from his neck, as a military order of Russia—the other, as an aigraffe, for his soft lamb-skin cap.

During his whole stay at St. Petersburg, a palace overlooking the Neva had been assigned for his own occupation, and a second (the Taurida) for the accommodation of his suite ; the whole being allowed carriages and horses throughout the day and night—himself always driving eight, accompanied by a complete retinue of servants and a guard of honour. At the parting interview between Prince Khosrou, and Alexander Nicholaevitch, the emperor's eldest son, sabres were exchanged, vows repeated, and mutual promises made, which time has yet to perform.

General Astrikass was a Livonian by birth, and, assuredly, one of the most hospitable governors in the Russian empire. We daily experienced much kindness and attention from himself and family, which it would be ungrateful to forget, or not to record. On our quitting Voronitz, after a halt of twelve days, he accompanied the motley *cortége* for several miles towards Stavropole ; and when he bade us adieu, he embraced the shah-zadez most cordially.

As we approached the Cossack country, we ran the risk of getting our necks broken at every verst, for it was difficult to know which were wildest, the drivers or their horses. The first specimen we had of this genius seemed bent on giving us an idea of what a Don Cossack *could* do, as he most scrupulously avoided the beaten track, and, setting hedges and ditches at defiance, dashed his steeds onward at full gallop, vociferating and yelling to the full extent of his stentorian powers. The animals, too, acknowledged in their way these stimulating appli-

ances, with distended nostrils, flowing manes, erect tails, and increased velocity. I can *well* imagine, that to a simple beholder, the scene would have worn the appearance of Phaeton driving the Pegasi with the whips of the Furies.

That several "breaks down" occurred is not very remarkable, nor the consequent annihilation of scores of kaleoons*, and the smashing of several dozens of Donskoi champagne, which would have sufficed to furnish a Lord Mayor's banquet. Monsieur le General Rennenkampff had certainly been most liberal in his supply of wines, and the *temperate* Persians were equally profuse in their libations to the memory of the blessed prophet Mahommed. By-the-by, one exception must, in justice, be made in favour of our friend Mirza Baba, the shah-zadeh's hakim-bashee, or physician general. He was most enthusiastically devoted to Bacchus, and excused himself for always being *entre deux vins*;

* Kaleoon, a Persian pipe.

as the weather was so bitterly cold, his shoob (cloak) was not sufficiently warm: he strongly recommended a tumbler of noyeau, or cherry-bounce, (*medicinally*, of course), as being highly salutiferous, and followed up his goodly precept by practice. Although he could empty a bottle of English brandy at one draught,* his sobriety was unimpeachable. You might as well have attempted to intoxicate a sponge. He was, beyond all dispute, the best specimen of a candidate for the "Temperance Society" I ever knew. Some years ago, our erudite pupil of Esculapius was sent to England, with other of his countrymen, by the *wish* of the Persian, but at the *expense* of the British government, for the purpose of studying medicine: he resided in London a considerable time, but was too lazy a dog to obtain his diploma. I had an opportunity of seeing a good deal of this

* I remember seeing the nakodâh (captain) of a trading boat, between Bussorah and Bagdad, take the same quantity of brandy, and in a similar way. It produced no intoxicating effect whatever.

Persian *roué* on the journey, and found his countenance so entirely at variance with his conduct, that it would have defied the keen penetrating eye of Deville himself. He had, however, gained a decided advantage over the rest of his compeers, by having added *our* vices to *his* own.

He was a married man—for who in Persia is not?—from motives of worldly interest; but as his village, (Khojah, in the volcanic province of Azerbijaun,) the gift of his royal master, Abbas Mirza, the prince royal of Persia, had been so abundant, and his fat wife so old and ugly, he determined to add to his household goods by taking another, and (must I add?) another; and “this time,” said he, “I shall consult my naturally good taste:” but how he intended to effect a choice from amongst the inmates of the numerous harems of Tabriz, was a secret he would not impart. Notwithstanding all her deficiencies, his pursy wife had one redeeming accomplishment, that of being a most rare confectioner, as boxes of various con-

serves given to our little girl, most *sweetly* told. Of these, the *jild-il-furuz*, or “mare’s leather,” equalled anything that Verey’s best *artiste en cuisine* could supply.

This unequalled sweetmeat is made of the juice of a particular kind of Persian grape, and loaf sugar, boiled together until it attains the consistency of Indian rubber. White manna cakes, made with almonds and cashewnuts*, and the Persian *kiss* of barley sugar, would not, I am quite certain, be thought inferior to what we get in England : and they possess an additional recommendation in my eyes, that these things are never made by menials, but are always the amusing occupation of the fair-fingered ladies of the harem.

* The produce of the *anacardium occidentale*, the *noix d’acajou* of the French.

CHAPTER II.

The River Don—Novo Tcherkask—Russian Women—Stavropole—
Bravery of the Tcherkessians—A French Play—Anecdote of
Prince Khosrou—Danger from Cold—Snow-storm—Dreadful
Night—Happy Meeting—Khosrou's Party—Intense Frost—The
Plague—The Lesguys—Amusing Spectacle—Passage of the
Caucasus.

OUR cavalcade crossed the river Don *en grande tenue* (still sledging it), and halted for a couple of days at Novo Tcherkask, the capital city of the Cossacks*, where we went through another edition of the same festivities as those of Tula and Voronitz. The delightful change from filth and dirt, to the extreme of cleanliness, not to be surpassed

* It is scarcely necessary to remind the reader that the name of *Cossacks* is taken from the Slavonic word *Koss*, a scythe. For want of arms, the peasants used to go to war with their scythes, whence they were called *Cossacks*, or scythemen.

by any people in the world, was truly gratifying to our feelings, for every part of their household establishment was in perfect keeping. Immediately on our arrival, we lost no time in enjoying the delights which warm water, soap, and clean linen impart, and inexpressibly delightful was the first and every succeeding day which we spent here, after having been for so many weeks obliged to submit to Russian filth and abominations. The harassed traveller alone knows the pleasure of such a change: to my weary family it was indeed a relief that none except those similarly situated can understand.

The river Don supplied our table with the most delicious fish, which closely resembled the sable of the Euphrates, both in shape and taste, and which were caught during the night by the fishermen of the place, by cutting large holes in the ice. Here we also enjoyed to perfection the celebrated Donskoi wine already noticed; and although most liberally supplied by our generous mehmaundar with champagne,

burgundy, Perkins's bottled porter, and every kind of wine and ale, of first-rate quality, we preferred the wine of the Don to any other beverage. It was sold in the public market for two roubles the bottle, or only ten shillings per dozen. The bazaar was the largest I had seen out of England. Several long platforms ran parallel to, and at right angles with each other: these were raised a foot or two from the ground, covered with lofty sheds, and surrounded by a steep stone-paved gutter, precisely after the manner of the new bazaars in Bombay, Poonah, and other Indian towns.

We took our leave of the governor of Novo Tcherkask, and reached Stavropole on the 8th of December, where Prince Khosrou, his mehmaundar the baron, and whole suite, were quartered at the governor's house. We were billeted on a major of infantry, who held some petty staff employment in the town, and who, with a wife and two children, considered himself "passing rich with *twenty* pounds a year." Three young slaves

formed the whole of his establishment, and the daily costume of the lady of the house was a common cotton print wrapper, or dressing-gown, drawn on as dowdily as it could possibly be ; though she possessed many valuable shawls, furs, and trinkets, which she only sported on feast and other gala days. This slatternly custom on the part of the Russian women prevails throughout the whole country. They should only be seen once a week, when attending mass ; but all the officers are excessive dandies, dress *à l'Empereur*, and drive very handsome sledges.

Stavrapole is the chief town of a district, and the head-quarters of the Russian general commanding the army of the Caucasus, which consists of ten thousand men. This force, however, is utterly unable to subdue the warlike Tcherkessians, who emerge from the sloping spurs of Mount Caucasus, and overrun the whole of this part of southern Russia. These brave Tcherkessians have never yet lost their independence, nor ever

will become tributaries either to Russia or to Turkey. Their expeditionary corps consists of five or six hundred well accoutred men, who break through the strongest Russian infantry squares, and behead every prisoner they take. Although the Russians have added to their large force, a number of Ossatinian Kossacks, who fight with great bravery, the Tcherkessians disperse them like dust. This harassing warfare has occupied, during the last twenty years, the ablest Russian generals, has decimated their regiments, exhausted their treasure, and still bids defiance to the Czar's most powerful efforts; and this too, without any assistance! A small supply of military stores occasionally sent over to them would most materially assist in keeping the Russian power in check on this frontier.

The general * had a most interesting family.

* I quite forget the name of the governor of this district and town, but he had highly distinguished himself at the battle of Leipzig, and was an officer of great ability.

The eldest of his eleven children, a daughter, was extremely pretty. Prince Khosrou, when on his way to St. Petersburg, fell desperately in love with her, and now, on his return, declared he had not seen any lady at the Russian court to compare with her in beauty. The children and their three governesses acted French plays in a large saloon fitted up as a theatre; and it was not a little gratifying to the shahzadeh, that he so well understood the language, for he always entered into the very spirit of what they were performing. A French play commenced the entertainment of the evening, dancing followed, then music and French games amused us until past midnight, when we supped in public. Refreshments were likewise handed round the whole evening, and large baskets of *bon-bons* were constantly disappearing. This we observed to be the practice at every party. A singular custom also prevailed after the ladies had retired from table—namely, a general and indiscriminate scramble for the remains of the supper, when each lucky individual deposited

in his pocket whatever his good fortune enabled him to clutch. I saw an old general, upon one occasion, strutting out of the room with the leg of a goose just peeping from the back pocket of his richly embroidered coatee. Mrs. Mignan inquired of Doctor Cormick what became of the custards and jellies? He replied, with a shrug, "I really don't know, but they all go in together."

Khosrou Mirza whiled away his time on this dull, monotonous road, with his favorite game—chess, of which he was passionately fond, when *not* in female society. He had a board and men adapted for use in a carriage, where he always invited to a trial of skill either Baron Rennenkampff, Mahommed Khan, or Mirza Massoud. Mrs. M. once had the *misfortune* to beat *son altesse*, the novelty and disgrace of which drove him from the room, colourless and affronted. This was the only instance that I saw of his temper gaining the ascendancy over his sound sense: it might be that the Persians standing near (Mahommed Khan, and Mirza Baba) ex-

claimed, "What! beaten by a woman—excellent! he will never forget that!" Doctor Cormick clapped his hands, and said, "See what a lady can do: where is the male superiority now?"

On the 23rd we quitted Stavrapole for Georgiesk, and nothing worthy of notice happened until Christmas-day, (a memorable day indeed,) when we arrived at a post-house, where we all dined, and where a double number of horses were engaged to accomplish a distance of forty versts, the longest stage throughout the whole line of road between Moscow and Mount Caucasus. At this point Mrs. Mignan was conveyed from her britzka to the post quite paralyzed with cold, and placed beneath a mountain of furs and cloaks, with the application of every means usually resorted to in these cases—violent friction applied to the feet, and hot brandy and water taken inwardly. This detained her until some time after the prince's party had started, and this was actually the cause of saving the life of herself and of her children. On being re-

stored, she also proceeded onwards for about an hour, when the drivers, finding that night was fast closing in and the storm still continued to rage with such fury that they could not face it, became seriously alarmed. Having lost all traces of the road, and finding the snow above the axletrees of the carriage, they, unknown to her, turned back, and most providentially reached the post-house they had so recently left. Ignorant of the drivers having returned, as they had only crawled along at a snail's gallop, with the snow up to the horses bellies, she felt the greatest alarm at finding herself at the door of a cottage where she could perceive no lights, nor any of the prince's carriages or attendants. The drivers vainly endeavoured to make her understand that it was the post-house whence they originally started, but she refused to alight. Fortunately at this moment a *calèche* with the two couriers who always brought up the rear, arrived, and induced her to alight with the servant and children. They explained in a few broken

French sentences that it was impossible to go forward, as the violence of the snow storm would prevent any guide from tracing the road. That dreadful night was passed in agony, heightened by the fact of whole squads of soldiers of a regiment then on its return from the Turkish campaign bringing in the lifeless bodies of their comrades. Of those brought in, some few were restored to life, others were past recovery, whilst hundreds remained shrouded beneath the snow.

On the following morning, the military, accompanied by parties of villagers, went forth with long poles with the intention of searching for the dead bodies of those who were missing. Mrs. Mignan continued in such a state of mind, that she preferred risking her life rather than remain any longer in an indescribable agony of suspense. As soon as there was some appearance of light, the couriers prepared a covered sledge for her accommodation, with plenty of fur cloaks, and seating themselves with the driver in front, they started off. They had not proceeded many miles before the storm recom-

menced, and they were compelled to return. In the afternoon, when it had abated, they again attempted to resume the journey, with four choice horses, and again failed. No alternative was now left to my poor lady, but to remain separated from us all for a second night, ignorant of our fate, but dreading the worst. To her unspeakable joy, the morrow broke with a clear sky. Taking a hasty cup of coffee, they set out in a wicker sledge of great lightness, leaving the carriages and "telegas" to follow, as, from the great depth of the snow, they could not accomplish the stage under eight or ten hours, having to be dragged through it; whereas the lightness of the sledge would enable themselves to perform it in about three hours. Midway we met, I having been also unsuccessful in my first and second attempts the day before; although in a large town, where the authorities, by order of General Rennenkampff, had provided parties of mounted guides, and the bravest of the military in bands of three unceasingly attempted, without success, to find the road the whole of the previous day;

so that my family were given up as lost. The prince, however, had determined not to proceed further, until some tidings should be heard of them, and, on their arrival, congratulations were poured forth by each and all.

Khosrou Mirza's party had likewise most severely suffered. The general, at the commencement of the storm, anticipating the danger that impended, insisted on the prince leaving the post-house with all speed, and entering the carriage with him. They then urged their drivers and their fourteen picked horses, kept ahead of all, and accomplished the stage, with the loss, however, of one postilion, who was frozen to death, whilst some of the others lost the use of their arms and legs.

The last time I was able to notice the thermometer, I found it at twenty-eight degrees below the freezing point of Fahrenheit, and still descending. Doctor Cormick, myself, Mirzas Salah, Baba, and others of the suite, were exposed to the fury of a drifting snow-storm for twenty-three successive hours, without being able to obtain any refreshment whatever, and only

saving ourselves by turning the carriages against the drifting snow and violent wind, that cut us like a sharp-edged razor. Every now and then we moved either forwards or backwards to effect a change of position, or we should have been buried altogether. Several post-boys were frozen to death upon their horses. Doctor Cormick lost the use of his left arm, and I, who had been in a kabitka or sledge, only partially covered, was so benumbed on my arrival, that I could not move hand or foot, but was carried into the post-house as dead.

During these three-and-twenty hours, I wore only two English great coats; I neglected to draw on a third at starting, and feeling the want of it a few minutes afterwards, I found it useless—it was as stiff and as hard as a deal board. The sensations I experienced were not by any means unpleasant; quite the contrary. I fancied myself falling into a most pleasing dream; and although perfectly conscious that this stupor was the certain precursor of destruction, I could not make the slightest effort to shake

it off. On recovering, I was assured that had they neglected to look into the sledge immediately on its arrival, and I been exposed a few minutes longer, I should have been a corpse.

We bailed at Georgiesk, and crossed the steppes to Alexandroff, and the great quarantine station of Ekaterinograd, situated on the rapid river Terek, where I had the previous year endured twenty-four day's solitary confinement. The universal topic of conversation here was the plague: it was the first time we had yet heard it mentioned, and several villages in the vicinity had been destroyed by fire at the express orders of the authorities. We passed one suspected hamlet, which was surrounded by a mounted guard, to prevent any person approaching it.

At Ekaterinograd we were furnished with a strong military escort and two twelve-pounders, to ensure our safe transit to the fortress of Vladi Kaukass, and to protect us against any sudden attack from the Lesguys, who scour the whole country hence to the very gates of Tiflis. On more than one

occasion, when led by their warlike chief Ummia Khan, they extended their ravages to the southward of the Araxes, and to within a few miles of Tabriz. They are divided into several independent tribes, and cannot be less in number than five hundred thousand men. The Russians have already sacrificed their hundreds in attempts to subdue them, hitherto wholly without success. During the last Persian war, these Lesguys brought from their mountains no fewer than thirty thousand fighting men to oppose the army of the Caucasus.

On reaching this fortress, the carriage travelling of the Persians was to end, to their no small delight, for they considered these vehicles only fit for sick men or old women, none of them having previously to their entry into Russia ever seen one. The manner in which they had urged on the poor "Jarvies" had repeatedly afforded us great amusement. They had no idea of travelling at a moderate pace, but wished to keep the unfortunate steeds at full gallop for the whole stage, and whenever the pace was mode-

rated, they, roaring with laughter, cuffed the Kaffer* drivers, and heaped upon them all the elegant abuse which their language so richly affords. At every stage they plied them with "vodki†," which intoxicates without causing that *pugnacious* quality that our gin imparts.

We here witnessed a most amusing *spectacle* from the windows of our bed-room, which commanded a view of the parade-ground, when a particular inspection was taking place, and the following extraordinary movements made.

The sergeant at the head of the first column produced a piece of pipe-clay, the fragment of a towel and a brush, and applied one or the other to every man in line. They appeared a raw set, which I suppose must account for such an unmilitary proceeding.

At this place we were obliged to abandon our carriage, it having undergone such

* Kaffer, or infidel—a term of reproach.

† An ardent spirit distilled from rye. It is consumed in great quantities by the Russians, both male and female.

violent shocks, that it could not possibly have stood the jolting of another stage. From the season of the year, it was found advisable also to leave the whole of the fifty carriages, except three, those of the Prince, Doctor Cormick, and Mirza Salah, at the same station: each of these had eighteen pair of oxen attached to them. The Prince, as well as the rest of the Persians, travelled on horseback, and my family occupied whichever of the carriages they felt inclined to take. Fourteen hundred men had been employed for a fortnight previously to our reaching Caucasus, in cutting a road through the snow. Hitherto none but the mounted post had ever effected the passage of Mount Caucasus in the month of January, and it was a common occurrence for one or more of the party to be lost. I may safely say, that Mrs. Mignan was the first lady who had performed it in the very depth of winter, and with two children, one not six months old!

CHAPTER III.

Fearful Road—Mountain Track—An Accident—Perilous Journey—Ossatinians—Unhappy Peasant—Anecdote of Count Paskewitch—Meschet—Approach to Tiflis—Arrival there—Splendid Costumes—The Countess Paskewitch—Georgian Dance—Georgian Princesses—Reception at the Palace—A Sunday masked Ball—A black Dwarf—Prince Galitzin—Beautiful Georgian—Georgian Women—Baths at Tiflis.

ON leaving Vladi Kaukass, we wound along the base of the perpendicular granite mountains, and by the side of a clear and rapid mountain-torrent, over which the peasants had erected several mills, of the rudest and most clumsy construction that could possibly be devised. The road was indeed more fearfully rugged than any over which we had ever passed; every turn of the wheels, which were entirely bound with rope, threatened to dash the carriage to atoms. The extraordinarily shaped ravines, and the awfully deep gorges which led into them, were very striking. The accommodation at the post-

stations being so small, afforded only two comfortless rooms, to obtain which we had to dislodge the commandants and their families, who were obliged to make shift with the kitchens and stables. It was therefore impossible that we could accompany the prince and his party; so, it was previously agreed upon, that, during the passage of these Caucasian Alps, we should precede them by one stage.

We did not reach the snow until the third day after our entrance, when early that morning the commandant of the station ordered two carts to go forward, as the snow was extremely deep, and a fall having taken place during the night, he wished to have a track marked out for the carriage. A military guard, and a courier to direct the operations of eighty men, with ropes attached to every part of the carriage, accompanied us. We had proceeded about a mile, and were ascending the sloping side of a vast mountain, when suddenly the first cart was hurled down a tremendous precipice, by a body of snow

shelving from an overhanging cliff. At the moment it wore the appearance of a dense cloud sweeping down the mountain's brow; but, instantly perceiving what had occurred, Mrs. Mignan leaped out of the carriage, determined not to advance another step. Indeed, this determination was anticipated, for the road was completely blocked up, and we were forced to return, when a party of soldiers were sent to dig out the unfortunate driver, and to endeavour to recover the property, which belonged to Khosrou Mirza, and which was very valuable. After digging for twelve hours they returned at eleven o'clock at night with the man, and most of the property. The horse had been torn limb from limb, and the cart shattered to pieces.

Shortly after this, the prince and suite arrived. Mrs. Mignan determined to remain in the carriage all night, as the shahzadeh occupied one room, and at least twelve persons were domiciliated in the second, whilst the inferiors inhabited a barrack shed. She continued in the carriage closely shut up,

until about twelve o'clock, when it was feared our lives would be endangered by longer exposure. The Persians parted off a small corner of the room already containing twelve persons, by hanging up shawls and cloaks, as *perdahs*, or screens.

Next morning, when the hour for starting had arrived, the road impediments had been removed, and fearful as it was, we were compelled to resume our perilous journey, which was more appalling than words can express. Some parts of our track were so dangerous from the avalanches which had shelved across it, that even the Persian horsemen dismounted and led their steeds for many miles : and we were forced to quit the carriage, and wade through the snow knee-deep. Some of the perpendicular precipices of this primitive chain were so fearful, that it was scarcely possible to look steadily over them. At one part of the road, I and another person held Mrs. Mignan, who wished to take a glimpse at a ravine which travellers have estimated to be ten thousand feet deep, where fir trees were

scarcely distinguishable, and seemed to be not an inch in height. The glancing of the sun's rays upon the snow must have been the cause of their being at all discernible.

We passed through an Ossatinian village, the inhabitants of which had submitted to the Russians, and were organized as Cossacks. The great mass of this tribe, however, yields no obedience to the imperial crown, and all acts of hostility against it, as well as highway robbery, are highly applauded. The profession of a freebooter is with them an honourable one. The only crime they consider disgraceful, is to break an oath once taken never to injure those with whom a treaty exists. A law founded upon compact is implicitly obeyed: in all other cases, "might is right."

At the defile of Annanour, which is another quarantine station in the recesses of this stupendous chain, we met a poor peasant overwhelmed with grief prostrated before the commandant, and exclaiming—"My wife, and parents, are lying dead of the

plague in the next village: I am afraid to bury them." The Russian instantly despatched a party of soldiers to set fire to all the neighbouring hamlets; and turning to me said, smilingly, "'Tis my vocation!" I gave the unfortunate sufferer a few roubles, which the commandant noticing, he laughed, and ridiculed the concern I expressed for this miserable Ossatinian. I subsequently mentioned the circumstance to Field-Marshal Count Paskewitch at Tiflis, who also laughed, and said, "You Englishmen are always inclined to regard with seriousness the *veriest trifles*."

We were six days in effecting this difficult and dangerous passage, having forced the *Pile Caspie** in the very depth of one of the

* Between the Euxine and the Caspian, the countries of Colchos, Iberia, and Albania, are intersected in every direction by the branches of Mount Caucasus, and the two principal *gates*, or passes from north to south, have been frequently confounded, in the geography both of the ancients and moderns. The Iberian *gates* are formed by a narrow passage of six miles in Mount Caucasus,

everest winters ever known in Russia. On the seventh, we passed through the picturesque city of Meschet, once the capital of Georgia, and the burial-place of all its ancient kings. Two fine churches still exist entire, and around the adjacent hills are the remains of walls and buildings, mouldering in decay. The peasants told me they often discovered old coins and medals,

which opens from the northern side of Iberia, or Georgia, into the plain that reaches to the Tanais and the Volga. These gates excluded the horsemen of Scythia from the shortest and most practicable roads, and the whole front of the mountains was covered by the rampart of Gog and Magog, the long wall which has excited the curiosity of an Arabian kaliph and a Russian conqueror. (Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Chap. xl. page 680. *Youngman*, 1830).

The imaginary rampart of Gog and Magog, which was seriously explored and believed by the kaliphs of the ninth century, appears to be derived from the *gates* of Mount Caucasus, and a vague report of the great wall of China. (Geograph. Nubiensis, p. 267-270. *Memoirs de l'Academie*, tom. xxxi. p. 210-219. See also a learned dissertation of Baier *de Muro Caucasio*, in *Comment. Acad. Petropol.*, ann. 1726. tom. i. p. 425-463.

amongst the ruins of this place, which they carried to Tiflis for sale. We were not fortunate enough, however, to procure any of them. The Koor and Aragua here form a junction: the former river boasts of a dilapidated bridge, supposed to have been the work of Pompey; the latter we crossed, and learnt with great joy that we were only thirteen or fourteen miles distant from the gates of Tiflis.

The road wound close at the foot of a succession of undulating gravelly hills of very considerable elevation, which formed a perpendicular wall on our right; whilst to our left we hung upon a precipitous bank, where the rain had gradually washed and shivered its edges, leaving scarcely its bare breadth for the passage of the carriages—the near wheels being frequently within an inch or two of a frightfully deep ravine, shelving down to the Koor, which playfully meandered through a fertile and beautifully wooded valley. Fronting us lay the extensive suburbs of the modern capital of Georgia and

two large German colonies ; in rear, the entire range of the Caucasian Alps, traversing the isthmus from sea to sea, with its volcanic looking peaks reposing beneath eternal snows, presented a landscape well worthy of the pencil of a Claude, or a Salvator Rosa.

Still winding along the steep and tortuous banks of the Koor, we arrived on the following evening at Tiflis, where Field-Marshal Count Paskewitch, Governor-General of Georgia, received the envoy with military honours. Having written from Moscow to Monsieur le Chevalier Gamba, the Consul of France, to engage us apartments, we found our request complied with, and were lodged within two doors of the Consulate. I had formerly received great attention from the chevalier, and on this occasion Mrs. Mignan became a debtor to his daughter for various acts of kindness, so much needed and dearly prized in situations like those I have described. I also had the satisfaction of hearing from Lord Heytesbury, who enclosed me more introductory letters, which eventually

proved of great use, and placed me under still deeper obligations to that hospitable and high-minded nobleman.

Before we had recovered from our fatigues, we were invited by the Countess Paskewitch to a grand ball and supper at the palace, where we saw the whole of the royal family of Georgia seated together upon sofas, at one side of the room; the countess and Khosrou Mirza occupied a couch at its head, and Paskewitch, Prince of Erivan, appeared amongst his numerous staff, one blaze of diamonds,—the very strings to the scabbard of his sword, and the scabbard itself, being entirely studded. The Persian order of the Lion and Sun, which he wore on his right breast, equalled the full moon in size, and his countess displayed the greatest number of large pearls Mrs. M. had ever witnessed on one individual; they were the size of a big pea. A double row was tacked round the top of the body of her dress, but on the shoulders they were left in several loops of three inches long: on the left shoulder to the front the miniature of the empress was

suspended; a little further back, on the same shoulder, that of the emperor—both set in brilliants. The same costly pearls, in two long rows, were hung around her neck, and a tiara of diamonds graced her head. Her countenance was very pleasing, though her features were large, her complexion most excellent, and her dark eye had great depth of expression. I should judge her to be a gifted and sensible woman. Indeed, she received the attentions of the company with that lady-like and graceful familiarity which would have made a pupil of the Almack's school of "*hauteurs*" ready to faint. She understood English, though she did not like to speak it, but requested Mrs. M. to converse with her in her native tongue, to which the countess replied in French. Mrs. Mignan received from her the most condescending kindness and attention, always finding the same reception on every successive visit we paid at the palace. She had two very interesting children of five and six years old, and a French governess, their English governess

having only a short time previously returned to her own country on *sick certificate*. Colonel Monteith, of the Madras Engineers, was, most opportunely for her, passing through Tiflis, with a vacant seat in his britzka; *others*, as well as himself, thought it could not be better occupied than by generously ceding it to his fair country-woman.

The marshal's manner was repulsive, or rather I should say he spoke with that quick and decided tone which is not agreeable in society. His eagle and restless eye never looked in the countenance of the individual whom he was addressing, but still seemed to know what was passing in his mind. Mrs. Mignan always felt a kind of fear at his immediate presence, and was somewhat puzzled to answer all his rapid and inquisitive questions. It was a relief when he turned to address another object. He is the only field marshal in the Russian army.

The band here was the best we had yet

heard, being full and very efficient. Due justice was paid to its spirited performance, by the dancers waltzing and galloping for many hours after supper. The prince *polonaised* with the countess, was always in high spirits, and enjoyed every thing around him. He had learnt a few words of English to address to Mrs. Mignan when he thought no one was near who understood them, and he sometimes raised the curiosity of his fair friends most provokingly.

For the envoy's amusement, one of the young Georgian princesses was requested to perform the national dance, when their own band was called into requisition, which in its stunning effect could not be surpassed by the most powerful Turkish or Indian music. The lady advanced a few steps from the place where she had been sitting, with body erect, arms extended, toes and heels moving with the greatest precision to the quick-timed music, which was regularly marked by the aid of a pair of rudely-shaped castanets. A second advance of a few steps was then made,

accompanied by a shuffling of the feet; then a receding movement, and a series of rapid tunes, closed this superlatively ungraceful dance. The age of the exhibitor might have been twelve or thirteen; she was dressed in the national costume, as indeed they all were, except two, who were married to Russian officers, and they were over-dressed *à la Française*. The appearance of these princesses disappointed us, inasmuch as they were automaton, shapeless in figure, and in most unbecoming habiliments; but with a purity of complexion unequalled in the world, features regular to a fault, and eyes of deepest black; lovely pictures in face, yet without the slightest expression. We did not observe them once exchange a word with each other; they might easily have been mistaken for waxen figures. The dance of the gentleman (a very handsome scion of royalty) differed from that of the lady only in extra exertion; feeling no bashfulness, he gave it full truth and play. The contrast between their usual demeanour, and the

activity displayed in this dance was very striking, and brought to mind the saying of Napoleon, that there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous.

The palace is a most extensive and handsome building ; its public suite of apartments splendid both in size and decoration. On ascending the grand staircase, we reached a corridor ornamented with lofty pillars, through which we were led to a hall full of military. Our cloaks were speedily received by the servants in waiting, and we passed up the banqueting-saloon, laid out with tables on each side for one hundred guests, and, crossing an ante-chamber, entered the ball-room. From the latter, two doors led into the drawing-room, which was most luxuriously and elegantly furnished with hangings of crimson satin damask, ornamented with gold fringes and tassels; mirrors reaching from the ceiling to the floor, ottomans, ormulas, candelabras, musical instruments, &c.

Crossing a gallery, used for promenading, we entered two very handsome card-rooms,

in which the old *roués*, who had lost all relish for the ball-room, sat risking their ducats at the *mouche* tables. Of this game all the Russians are passionately fond; especially the ladies, who are the chief actors in this drama of chance.

We here became acquainted with Prince Galitzin, who had accompanied the late Emperor Alexander to this country during the year 1814. He was a nephew of the highly respected governor-general of Moscow, and commanded a regiment of cavalry stationed in Georgia. We saw him every day, and found his society most agreeable. He was a perfect gentleman.

The military governor-general, Strekaloff, to whom we had letters, lived in quite a different style to Prince Paskewitch, but nevertheless as became his rank and station. He gave a splendid *bal masqué* during our stay here, to which we were invited, but would not go, the day chosen being Sunday, which I may here remark is the favourite *fête* day of the Russians; the same occurrence

having taken place before at Tula, and other places. Our home-bred scruples, as they were termed, caused a good deal of merriment, and we were requested by some to go, merely to look on; for there could be no sin in using our eyes, if we did not speak. Such was their style of argument.

General Strekaloff's valet was a black dwarf, thirty-two years old, and only three feet and a half in height, for whom he was most anxious to procure a wife, but did not know by what means to attain his object. He had however advertised for one suited in stature, as the little man was a great favourite, and the general wished to make him happy and contented. What success eventually attended this matrimonial scheme we did not hear, as, up to the day of our quitting Tiflis, the black dwarf was still in single blessedness.

Prince Galitzin assured us how much we had lost by not having been present at Strekaloff's masquerade, as he said it was the best he had ever seen; that the number

of masquers could not have been exceeded if it had taken place at Moscow, and that there had been much fun and gaiety. He did not forget to add, on his own account, that the decorative part of the business had been got up under his own directions, and executed by the military under his orders. He was, doubtless, a great adept in all these things. Having been in London with the allied sovereigns, during the carnival of 1814, he could not have failed to improve his talents and taste; for no one could have been a visitor at the most dazzlingly splendid court in the world—that of his late Majesty King George the Fourth—without forming a better taste, and improving any talent for embellishment with which he might have been gifted.

We spent many very pleasant evenings at Chevalier Gamba's house, when there was no larger party going on. His daughter was a well-bred sensible woman, and our *soirées* there were far more entertaining than the *grande affaires* at the palace. Mirzas Salah and Massoud were the two determined

gamblers of our party, and found a ready partner in the chevalier, who, I am inclined to believe, was an over-match for their inexperience, because his secretary more than once corrected a *little mistake* he made, when playing ducat games at *ecarté* with Mrs. Mignan. Nevertheless, they were both good Catholics — the daughter really so; for nought save hard boiled eggs were their portion on a Friday, though we were vicious enough to employ our most persuasive efforts in endeavouring to induce them to take more digestive food.

The most beautiful Georgian woman that we saw was the daughter of the landlord of our house, who, had she been an inhabitant of any capital in Europe, would have been run after as a divinity; so true is it that “no one is a prophet in his own country,” for here she was thought nothing of. Mrs. Mignan had many opportunities of seeing her, and for the pleasure of admiring her beauty, held conversations by signs, (she could speak no other language than her own) and felt as-

sured there was no aid of foreign ornament. Her figure was slim, tall, and well formed for a Georgian, with auburn hair of great length. My wife had a curiosity to see how she would look smiling or laughing, and, wishing to produce this *phenomenon*, pinched her arm, pulled her hair, &c., and at last elicited a solitary smile, which, however, conveyed no corresponding expression to the eyes.

Chardin says that the complexion of the Georgians is the most beautiful in all the East, and that he never saw an ill-favoured countenance in the country. "I have seen," he adds, "those that have had angels' faces, so that it is impossible to behold them without falling in love. They are tall, clean limbed, plump, and full, but not over fat, and extremely slender in the waist; let them have never so few clothes on, you shall not see their hips.

"—— Georgia is a garden sweet,
And beauty's own romantic seat;
The dark-browed maidens there possess
The boon of perfect loveliness.

Circassian damsels, too, display
Superior charms, and, ever gay,
Chase sorrow from the heart away."

A Georgian girl is often married by the *wish* of her parents at the early age of twelve; for although they are not as formerly so easily smuggled out of the country, yet the Russians are constantly seizing them, to gratify their own gross and vicious inclinations, and, when ordered away, leave no provision whatever for the offspring of such connexions.

Gibbon says, "it is in Georgia that nature has placed, at least to our eyes, the model of beauty, in the shape of the limbs, the colour of the skin, the symmetry of the features, and the expression of the countenance. The men are formed for action, and the women for love." Yet the most accurate of all the ancient historians, Herodotus, declares, that the natives in his time were dark-complexioned (*μελανοχροες*), and had crisp curling hair (*οὐλοθρικές*): such is the change produced by the mixture of nations,

and the slow but powerful influence of climate. Their great delight is in bathing, shampooing, and sipping coffee, which at Tiflis may be enjoyed to perfection. The baths are situated on the banks of the Koor, and are impregnated with sulphurated hydrogen. Their temperature is 112° of Fahrenheit.

CHAPTER IV.

Kidnappers—Visit to the Imaum's Harem—Splendid Costume—Rich Apartment—Circassian Women—Caucasian Clans—Independence of Georgia—Persian Atrocity—Death of the Tyrant—Persian Emigration—Fallacious Promises—Enormous Avalanche—Population in Georgia—Tiflis—Kajavahs—The Takht-Rawaun.

REGULAR bands of kidnappers were once established throughout the whole of Georgia, whose sole occupation was to surprise and carry away boys and girls for the markets of Constantinople, Cairo, and Teheraun. Some of the latter found their way to Baghdad, and even into the harem of the Imaum of Muscat, who, by the way, has amongst his four hundred ladies some of every clime and country, save Europe. In 1825, when *en route* for Turkish Arabia, we visited Muscat on board his highness's brig of war "Psyche," and Mrs. Mignan was invited to pay a visit to his harem. At this time he had but one *married*

wife, although allowed four, and was in treaty for a princess of Shirauz. Mrs. Mignan, her female servant and I, went to the palace, where his highness was in waiting to receive us. At the conclusion of the usual ceremonies of coffee-sipping and sherbet-drinking, his highness most politely took Mrs. Mignan by the hand (the native servant following), and led her through several parts of the palace, until they came to a door to which was attached a padlock of at least a foot in length. They entered, and ascended by a staircase, at the top of which was a trap-door, with two more of these enormous padlocks, where two handsome young eunuchs awaited their approach. These were the only individuals wearing *men's* clothing who ever obtain the "open sesame," and are admitted within the sacred precincts of the harem. Here commenced the carpeting, of most splendid and laborious workmanship, with raised flowers of every hue, embossed upon the finest quality of kerseymere. A table, covered with every Arabian delicacy,

was laid out at a latticed window overlooking the sea of Oman, before which was placed three English-shaped chairs. Mrs. Mignan was requested to be seated on one, the Imaum took the second, and in unceremoniously glided "Oman's Queen," who seated herself on the vacant one. His mother sat at her feet, and our Hindoostanee ayah (nurse) in the same position, by her own mistress.

"I could not then," to use Mrs. Mignan's own words, "speak a word of Arabic, so that Hindoostanee was the medium of our conversation. All the other females, and a vast number of children of both sexes, stood gazing at me in wonderment from a little distance, as I was the first European lady who had visited their harem. They were richly apparelled, and in a variety of costumes, but none pretty; too many appeared to be corpulent, and those were beautifully fair. 'Son altesse' was *not* good looking; decidedly the plainest I could see. But who on such an occasion could do more than take a very hasty glance in search of personal

beauty, when there was so great a feast for the eyes in the magnificent ornaments of her person? Lacks of rupees would not have purchased half that she wore. One emerald, forming the centre of a necklace composed of emeralds, rubies, and diamonds, was larger than a pigeon's egg. Her feet and ankles were so completely obscured by massive jewelled ornaments, that they needed no other covering. Her arms also, to above the elbow, where a tight sleeve met a tighter body, were encased within a richly embroidered gold kinkob, while a train of dark crimson satin, likewise embroidered in gold, reposed upon the ground. She wore a petticoat of purple satin, in the same style of rich embroidery; and, to complete the *tout ensemble*, a valuable Cachmere shawl crossed her shoulders, and rested on her lap. Over her eyes (all the females present had it also) she wore a frightful thing, which resembled a pair of broad-rimmed spectacles, but made of some kind of stiff cloth, richly worked and spangled with gold. These extraordinary *lunettes* are always worn by the

omen whilst in the presence of the Imaum, and thrown off when they are alone. It partly covers the nose, and is tied on behind the head like our own masks.

One of the rooms into which I was taken struck me much, from its extremely rich appearance, having several handsome chandeliers, and alternately windows of stained and pier glass, from the ceiling to the floor, no wainscot being seen, except in one corner of the apartment, where stood a bed. The divan around the room was raised about three inches, covered with the finest Persian carpeting, which closely resembled, both in texture and pattern, the stuff of which the Cachmere shawl is made. A double row of cushions stood there; those next the wall being of the Indian kinkob, whilst the front row were composed of white satin embroidered in gold, with fringes and tassels of the same."

The Imaum of Muscat has some few Circassian ladies, which were conveyed to him via Baghdad and Bussora, by Circassian

dealers, who trade with such of their countrymen as bring up their *own* children for the Turkish and Egyptian markets. This is of course done by stealth on the northern frontiers of Mount Caucasus, because the Russians use every means in their power to prevent the inhabitants (especially young girls) from quitting the country. Women are actually found, who of their own free will request to be sold. With a view of securing a ready compliance on the part of their relatives, they declare that they have taken an oath to fulfil this resolution, and the respect always paid to such a sacred obligation precludes any opposition being offered to the determination of those who have incurred it. This may at first appear startling, but it is the effect of female *curiosity*, and various other causes; above all, the hope of realizing some little property, and of releasing themselves from a state of constant drudgery and toil, to which all women in Circassia are subjected. Instances have occurred, where some have returned from their trip

to Stamboul free, their Turkish masters having manumitted them; and their descriptions of the delights of the harem, and the presents they bring away, determine other young girls to try a similar fortune. They are certainly very pretty, but their beauty does by no means deserve the reputation it has obtained; and those women who enter the Turkish and Egyptian harems invariably become fat and pursy. They are not publicly exposed for sale like the Nubians and Abyssinians, but a purchaser may always obtain a private ticket of access to their exhibition.

Little was known of Georgia until Queen Catherine of notorious memory sent Guldenstaedt to examine the country, and report upon its inhabitants. He enumerates *seven* distinct nations, divided into numerous tribes, all speaking their own dialects. The Caucasian isthmus contains many clans, some of which have not yet been known to us, nor subjugated by the Russians, though their country is considered but a canton of Russia, and is included within the limits of that

huge empire. Although Georgia and Armenia were conquered by Nourchirwaun, invaded by Alp-Arslan, overrun by Timour, ravaged by Ismael, subdued by Tamasp, and retaken from the Turks by Abbas the Great, it never wholly lost its independence, but preserved itself as a kingdom for nearly two thousand years, and retained its ancient faith in Christianity for no less a period than fourteen centuries, although seated in the very centre of countries enthusiastically devoted to the Mahomedan religion. The existing remains of towns and cities, amongst the *debris* of which are discovered gold and silver coins of Media, Parthia, Persia, Greece and Rome, attest the various nations that have anciently been in possession of Georgia.

At the conclusion of the last century Georgia was declared independent, and in 1795, Aga Mahommed Khan, the late eunuch King of Persia, advanced to its capital. His very first act was an order for the slaughter of every human being inhabiting this flourishing town; his next was to set fire to it. Every

excess that hatred and bigotry could dictate, was committed. Pillage, murder, and conflagration, met the eye on every side. While some were occupied in plundering the villas of rich merchants, and others in setting fire to the hamlets, the air was rent with the mingled groans of men, women, and children, who were falling under the daggers of the Persians. The only exception made during the massacre, was of the young women and boys, who were spared to be sold as slaves. Many of the women whose husbands had been butchered, were running to and fro frantic, with torn garments and dishevelled hair, pressing their infants to their breasts, and seeking death as a relief from still greater calamities that awaited them. The number slain, or dragged into slavery in those dreadful days, was not less than twenty thousand.

In the course of the following year, this brutal old eunuch, in order to increase the number of his horrid crimes, determined to revisit Georgia. He passed through Azerbijan, crossed the Araxes, and had reached

the fortress and town of Sheesha, the capital of the fertile district of Karabaugh, when his murderous career was arrested by the hand of violence. Two servants of his Majesty, holding the most menial offices in his camp, whom he had sentenced to death for a trivial offence, knowing there was no chance of a reprieve, entered the royal suite of tents during the night, and, creeping to the spot where the king slept, put an end with their daggers to one of the most cruel tyrants that ever ruled over the kingdom of Persia. It is quite beyond the limits of this work to particularize his cruelties. Suffice it to say, that in the very first year of his government, he deprived no fewer than seventy thousand people of their eyes, and massacred at least a hundred thousand. We all know that even to this day in Persia, they think no more of plucking out an eye, or a tongue, than we do of extracting a tooth.

The Russians have certainly introduced many reforms into Georgia, but as their own peasantry are serfs, they have not yet ven-

tured to liberate others. Until a late date, a Georgian prince could sell his vassals, and execute summary vengeance on his serfs, by mutilation or death. But existing abuses do not deter vast emigrations into Georgia. In the year 1820, alone, not less than ten thousand Persian families crossed the boundary, to whom it was intended to assign lands, and to this day both Turks and Armenians are continually claiming the protection of the Russian Government.—I remember, however, that in the year 1828, when I crossed the Araxes, on my journey to Europe by Russia and Germany, the influx had been so great, that I met thousands of both sexes and all ages, returning again to Persia, execrating the name of Paskewitch, the governor-general of Georgia, to whom they attributed all their misfortunes, and from whom they had received the most flattering but fallacious promises.

Marshal Paskewitch proposed to settle thousands of Armenians on the northern

side of Mount Caucasus; he even *forced* them to quit Persia with his army, promising them houses and lands similar in size and extent to those they had vacated. They accordingly left the Persian territory, and were quartered in several Russian villages bordering the Caucasus, until (as they supposed) settlements were provided. Nothing whatever was done for them. Peace with Persia was proclaimed, and the wanderers were forced to return home, and to find their houses pillaged, and their lands laid waste. It is not generally known that the Armenians hate the Russians even more than they abhor the Mahommedans; they have only one wish—that the British would take them under their protection.

The whole country is prettily diversified with mountain scenery, gradually spreading out into hills and dales wooded with the fir, beech, and oak. The villages are built upon the sloping sides of hills or heights, after the manner of the Koordish hamlets. The vine is extensively cultivated, and immense herds

of swine swarm in every town. The melting of the snows on Mount Caucasus cause floods to pour down from the hills with such violence as to sweep every thing before them. To give some idea of the enormous masses of snow which are constantly thawing during the summer season, I must mention that in my journey across Caucasus, in August, 1828, a mass of frozen snow had detached itself from a neighbouring peak, and shelved down across the pass, covering a ravine to the extent of at least three miles, and rendering the passage very dangerous, and nearly impracticable. This was near the cross mountain, where basaltic porphyry, and schistose peaks, rise to the height of three thousand feet. The road was constructed under the immediate direction of Count Paskewitch. It is practicable during summer for a carriage; and post-horses may be had at every stage right through the whole mountain track.

For a great portion of the year the sky is cloudless and pure. The summers are as hot (in the valleys) as the winters are severe:

in fact, every possible degree of temperature may be had on the sloping spurs of Mount Caucasus.

The total amount of population in Georgia cannot be less than four hundred thousand, of whom seventy-five thousand are Armenians, and another seventy-five thousand Georgian and Russian troops cantoned throughout the districts.

The number of inhabitants are increasing, because they are not now reduced by the dissensions of the chiefs, who used to be eternally warring with each other, and trafficking for the harems of the great. The incursions of the Koords, also, utterly desolated the frontier provinces; and in the year 1603, when that accomplished despot Shah Abbas marched into Georgia, he carried off no less than ten thousand families. It must be added, however, as a striking proof of his beneficial despotism, that instead of making them slaves, compelling them to change their religion, and to undergo circumcision, as his predecessors had done in similar cases, he

colonized them throughout the kingdom, and offered them his protection and patronage. The Armenian colony of Julfa, formed by him at Ispahaun, remains to this very day an honourable monument of his wise and liberal policy. All these drawbacks on population have now entirely ceased, and the Russians have adopted measures for the encouragement of agriculture, which cannot fail to produce the best effects. Tiflis has risen, from a mean and dismal-looking town, into a cheerful, bustling city; and notwithstanding its disadvantageous position, has become a place of great importance. Its trade is on the increase, and its population, which, in the year 1826, was only twenty-six thousand, has risen in four years to thirty-three thousand.

Prince Khosrou having determined to pass through the mountainous district of Karabagh on his way into Persia, and there being no other mode of conveying our servant and children, we were obliged to have a pair of kajavahs constructed by a Georgian carpenter, which turned out no easy job for

him. When first brought to *try on*, they were too large, then too short, then again too cumbersome, until, by dint of patience and perseverance, we got them chiselled to something near the mark. Kajavahts are the commonest kind of litter used for travelling through the most mountainous parts of Persia. In shape they resemble one of those small dog kennels which are daily seen in our own stable yards; they measure about four feet in height, by two in width, and proportionately deep. One of them is strapped on a mule with leathern thongs, in the same manner as a pair of panniers, and they must of course be equally balanced, or a capsize will be the consequence. This conveyance usually accommodates two persons; on the present occasion it had to carry four inside passengers, large and small, for which no extra charge was made, nor any licence infringed. Mules are trained for the express purpose of bearing it, and when these animals are pronounced by the katur-jee (muleteer) as having attained a profi-

ciency in the art of ambling, the motion to a traveller is not unpleasant. But by far the most desirable kind of conveyance is the takht-rawaun, which is like the Indian palankeen, *vulgariter* palki. It has shafts (fore and aft) for two mules, and in this you may have a mattrass and pillows, and recline at full length, which, as my poor wife knows to her discomfort, cannot be done in the kajavah; but a takht-rawaun would have been useless to us over the steep and rugged passes of Karabaugh.

CHAPTER V.

Departure from Tiflis—Ancient Iberia—Subterranean Houses—
Inconvenient Intruders—Dreary Region—Tayaz—Zegaum—
Ganja—Poverty of the Town—A Yorkshire Gourmand—Mutual
Condolences—Manufactures of Ganja—War in Karabaugh—
Domination of Russia—Aga Syyud Mahomed—His reception at
Teheraun—The Plague.

ON the 31st of January, having concluded all our arrangements, we took our leave of Tiflis; most willingly, I admit, for throughout our whole stay the weather had been unpleasantly wet, and the streets nearly impassable. Field-Marshal Paskewitch Erivan-ski, General Strekaloff, and their whole staff, accompanied the envoy to the gates of the city, and Prince Galitzin, M. le Chevalier Gamba, and several other friends, rode with us far beyond its outer barriers. Great was the amusement of our friends to see Mrs. Mignan sitting *à la Persienne*, in which po-

sition they declared she would not continue for a quarter of an hour. She, nevertheless remained in that painful attitude the whole time they were with us, being at least an hour and a half; but when we had exchanged adieus, and they rode off, she found great difficulty in effecting a change of position, so as to admit of the feet resting on the stirrup-board, which had been fixed, by my direction, to hang down as a supporter for them.

We left the sublime chain of "frosty Caucasus" in the rear, covered with perpetual snows; and, following the course of the sluggish Koor* (the Cyrus of antiquity), in a south-easterly direction, entered at once upon the plains of the ancient Iberia, which lay spread out before us, till lost in the blue haze of distance. The prospect was a most uninteresting and even depressing one, for every passing cloud sprinkled flakes of snow

* This river waters the whole of Georgia, and receives, in its course, numerous tributaries from Caucasus. It joins the Arras (Araxes), and falls into the Caspian.

on our track, and momentarily threatened a heavy fall. Our road wound through a succession of low argillaceous and gravelly hills, at no great distance from the river, near which we saw some remains of Georgian architecture. The village of Saganlook, situated about ten miles distant from Tiflis, was the place marked out for the termination of our first day's march. The houses, if they can be so called, were wretched in the extreme; we could scarcely distinguish them from the inequalities of the surrounding ground—a method of construction adopted, perhaps, on account of the severity of the climate. Their construction corresponded exactly with those mentioned by Xenophon in the *Anabasis*, or expedition of Cyrus into Persia*. The rooms were all beneath the surface of the earth, so that we were obliged to descend by a ladder, or by steps cut out

* Their houses were underground; the mouth resembling that of a well, but spacious below: there was an entrance dug for the cattle, but the inhabitants descended by ladders. (See *Expedition of Cyrus*, Book IV., page 280).

of the calcareous sand-stone bank, which formed the side of these sepulchral abodes. In this particular part of Georgia the excavating a hut is a work of easy accomplishment. A circular pit is dug, and with the *débris* and unhewn stones the sides are formed. Over this well-shaped excavation they lay rafters, and on these again, earth. In walking *over* a village, it would be difficult to tell whether you were on a house-top or on the bare ground, if it were not for the circular perforations which are made in the centre of the roofs to admit light and air. All these subterranean habitations are exceedingly dark, and if the aperture overhead be closed, the inmates would be stifled with the smoke of their wood fires, and an unfortunate stranger, in his evening promenade, be *grilled* and *dished* in the course of a few seconds, to the horror of the *cuisinier*, at his sudden *entrée* by the chimney.

One of these chambers was appropriated to us, the inmates having been most unceremoniously turned out for the night.

Our servant had just commenced spreading out the carpets, and laying our bedding upon them, when down rushed a whole squad of goats, donkeys, and sheep, who knew their dormitory much better than we did, and who proceeded to possess themselves of that portion of the dwelling which they always occupied *. In so doing they raised a dust most offensive to persons whose beds were being made on the ground. We were much shocked at the intrusion, but thought it better to let them remain than raise a new dust by endeavouring to eject them.

On quitting this village we bade adieu to the often-travelled Erivan road, on which post-horses are now to be had as far as the Araxes, and descended a narrow ravine into a valley bounded by an inconsiderable, but romantically situated lake. The hills on our right presented the habitations of the peasantry,

* In these houses were goats, cows, and fowls, with their young. All the cattle were maintained within doors with fodder. (Expedition of Cyrus, Book IV., page 281).

which were indicated by packs of ravenous dogs foraging on the offal of their premises. The people appeared miserably poor. On leaving this valley, an abrupt ascent brought us to an open tract of country, which, to the south, was bounded by a flat horizon, while, to the east of our course, the turbid Koor playfully meandered through a fine rich soil, until it was lost in the capricious stratification of the inhospitable-looking mountains. Towards dusk, we reached a post station, where General Rennenkampff took a strong escort of Cossacks, having to go many miles to reach our proposed sojourn for the night.

We had not proceeded more than three or four miles ere it became quite dark ; all traces of the road were lost, and we had nothing to prevent our falling over a precipice overhanging the river that was rippling at our side, but the warning murmur of its course. At ten o'clock we reached Beerchaly, a wretched village on the banks of the river Khram, where a fine bridge is still standing, the work of the Romans. Here we obtained

snipes, ducks, and bitterns, in great plenty, for all the Persians were splendid shots. The Shahzadeh betted he would bring down half-a-dozen brace, which bet he soon won, and desired them to be conveyed to us.

Passing through Tasantoo, we ascended a range of mountains, which were rugged, though not of any great altitude. The road up them was scarcely wide enough to admit the kajavahts to pass. We descended by a track of much the same difficulty, which gradually opened out into a valley traversed by a stream running to the north-east. On its banks the remains of an extensive city still exist. After crossing the dry bed of a river, we arrived at Tayaz, where we found warm and comfortable quarters. A supper consisting of apps, eggs, milk, butter, and honey, was set before us. This latter luxury was in great abundance, and is doubtless an article of profit to every village throughout Georgia. The people were very hospitable, and possessed herds of cattle, with plenty of "gommey," or millet.

At seven o'clock in the morning we again set forward, and halted at the Mahommedan village of Zegaum, about ten miles from our last stage. The road was unusually stony and rugged, and the river Algat meandered at a short distance. We met several caravans of mules very heavily laden with bales of merchandise. The poor animals, when lightened of their loads, were allowed to stray about in quest of pasture. The bales were heaped one upon the other, beneath which the muleteers cooked, and sheltered themselves from the cold. We also passed several Georgians carrying immense loads.

On leaving Zegaum, we crossed the Algat, through a deep and rapid ford, and pushed on for Borsoom, distant about twelve miles. The road traversed was execrable, and very muddy. We trusted entirely to the great experience of our mules, which were wonderfully sagacious in selecting paths: but in spite of all their sagacity, they often sank to the girths in holes of mud. We passed the ruins of a very considerable city, where there

was a splendid minaret, and many Armenian inscriptions.

Our road continued south-south-east for twelve more miles, winding through glens, and over an undulating plain without a tree or shrub. At about five miles distance from Ganja, that town is discovered, which, with its numerous and extensive gardens, presented a most agreeable *coup d'œil*. It is seated on a wide spreading plain, whereon many villages are scattered; its natural fertility, and the abundance of its pastures, made it until lately a favourite cantonment of a detachment from the Russian army, when employed in this direction against the Persians. Several hamlets which formerly existed on the plain are now in ruins, and a great portion of the country harbours the pastoral Koords, who migrate for the winter season.

Ganja, or Elizabeth Pol*, as it is called by the Russians, is the first place of any modern note on approaching Persia from the north-west. It is built upon a broad moun-

* Sometimes pronounced *Elisavetpole*.

tain torrent, (spanned by a ruinous brick bridge of six arches), beneath the Aligèz mountains, which divide the beautiful province of Karabaugh from that of Erivan. The appellative "Karabaugh" signifies, in the Turkish language, the "Black Garden," implying the richness and fertility of the whole district. I have said that the approach to the town wore an imposing appearance, it being surrounded by enclosures and gardens, resembling an oasis in the desert. As we entered, however, this delusive aspect vanished, and we found ourselves passing through a large maze of utter ruins, abandoned suburbs, and crumbling walls. These concealed the houses from our view, until we passed through a paltry bazaar that extended for some hundred yards, partially occupied by shops of the most needful trades, and these very scantily and miserably supplied. Every thing breathed of poverty and oppression; in fact, with the exception of the house of the Russian commandant, the habitations were deplorable in the extreme. Even the fortress has been

allowed to go to ruin, as the Russians say the climate is too unhealthy for a large military station. This is unaccountable, for the position is certainly high, dry, and open, and free from marsh and jungle.

The principal room in a silk weaver's house was given up to us by order of the Russian commandant, through the kindness of General Rennenkampff. Our Mahomedan host gave us his best carpet, lighted a cheerful fire, and prepared a good supper of fowls and eggs, which were followed by coffee and the chibouque. We found that the luxuries of Tiflis had not at all impaired our relish for this homely fair. Doctor Cormick's servant, Thomas, a Yorkshireman, a bit of a rogue, and *gourmand*, was eternally praying that he might get plenty to eat and drink, and be sent safe home to his wife.

"Well, Thomas, what have you been about to-day?" we inquired, as he entered our apartment.

"Only to the bazaar, Sir, to get something to eat."

"And what did you procure there?"

"A Kabobed goose, which I ate, and found so good, that I told them to get another ready for to-morrow's march, which I shall carry in my pocket, as I don't know what I may get further on, and master never thinks of any one but himself."

His master returned the compliment by declaring that whenever he inquired for Thomas, they told him the glutton was at the bazaar, getting something to eat. It was odd enough to hear the colloquies between Thomas and Mary our woman-servant; how they sighed over the lost comforts of old England, the want of inns, and every kind of ease. They both agreed that in their present mode of life, they were more like "*hanimals*" than human beings.

Ganja was an hereditary fief in the family of Jawaunt-Khan Kajar, who opposed the Russians by every means he possessed. He fell when they took the place to prevent the Persians making any advances on Georgia through Karabaugh. The town contains

five thousand inhabitants, who are all Mahomedans of the Shiah sect. The language spoken here is a dialect of the Turkish, but the people read and write the Persian. The manufacture of silk and cotton stuffs is carried on to a great extent. This is for exportation, of course, and a supply is regularly sent to the Russian market; though, as yet, little encouragement is held out. I was told that a small quantity had found its way *viâ* Persia to Bombay, and that the wealthy and enterprising merchants of that rising presidency had justly appreciated it.

The Ganja people are very hostile to their present governors, from a religious feeling, but the peasantry are favourably disposed to them, as they evade various taxes which were exacted by their ancient rulers.

When the last rash and unequal war broke out between Russia and Persia, the inhabitants of Ganja expelled all the Czar's troops, and joined a division of the Persian army, which Abbas Mirza sent from Sheesha to occupy it. The Persians unfortunately

neglected to repair the fortress, so that it again fell into the hands of the Russians, who have threatened to bring twenty thousand Cossack families from the banks of the Don, to people the now deserted mountains of Karabaugh. Fifteen thousand Dutch ducats per annum is all that Russia can screw out of this province, which formerly yielded at least four hundred thousand.

Karabaugh submitted to Russia in the early part of the present century, after having been the scene of many general actions. Count Zuboff captured Ganja during the reign of the Russian Empress Catherine, but soon evacuated it. General Seseanoff subsequently took it, when, by the mediation of Sir Gore Ouseley, ambassador extraordinary from the court of Great Britain to the Shah of Persia, a pacific treaty was concluded. Persia gave up all her acquisitions south of Mount Caucasus, and Russia agreed to aid the rightful heir to the Persian throne against all usurpers. When the riots in St. Petersburg took place, con-

sequent upon the Grand Duke Constantine's abdication in favour of his brother Nicholas, the court of Teheraun fancied that a civil war had actually broken out in the north, and that the numerous tribes inhabiting the Caucasus had risen *en masse* against the Russians. The Persian chieftains made proposals to his royal highness Abbas Mirza to co-operate with him in a crusade against the Russians, and a moojetehedor (high priest from the holy shrine of Kerbela) exhorted his Persian majesty to this extreme proceeding. The old Syjud called upon the Moollahs to flock around him, and the whole nation listened to their inflammatory orations. The first advance of Abbas Mirza into Karabaugh was crowned with complete success; he annihilated the Russians wherever he met with them; but instead of pursuing them to the very gates of Tiflis, he lay smoking his kaleoon within the fortress of Sheesha, intoxicated with his victory, until the roaring of the Russian cannon disturbed his dreams, and sent him back to Tabriz by

“double march.” Even that city, the second in political importance in the empire, fell into the hands of Marshal Paskewitch, without a sword having been unsheathed in its defence! The whole country was then, as it now is, within the grasp of Russia, and all this, too, through the rashness of that weak-minded prince Abbas Mirza, who was most thankful to make peace on any terms, or, as a Hindoo rajah would say, “at master’s pleasure.”

Russia now interferes with Persian affairs *ad libitum*; and England, who might have prevented the aggressive and unjust schemes of the autocrat, looks placidly on the scene, and is quite satisfied with her own innocence and fidelity! A few more years, and she will bitterly reproach her blind and irreparable policy. A gentleman with whom I once travelled, said, “The Russians are now cutting up the Persians—they appear to help themselves to what they please. A fine set of dishes are placed before them; India on one side, China on another; Persia here,

Turkey there. The autocrat slices now at one, then at another: he tickles his palate like a Frenchman at a *table d'hôte*: he cuts at the globe as we should at a melon. I suppose he means to cut and cut till he reaches Calcutta."

The following singular account of the reception given to Aga Syyud Mahomed, the high priest of the holy shrine of Messhed Hussein, at the court of Teheraun, is from an eye-witness, and its insertion in this place may not be without interest to the reader.

"When Aga Syyud Mahomed arrived, a vast number of people, and most of the infantry, without regimentals or arms, went out to meet him. The shah sent his own litter for the holy man, and some princes, and many of the chief people of the court, did honour to his entry. Much enthusiasm was manifested by the populace. To the Syyud's person they could not get access, but they kissed the litter, kissed the ladder by which he ascended to it, and collected the dust which had

the impression of the mule's feet that bore him. The people beat their breasts, and the litter was brought close to the shah's door, that the syyud might alight without being overwhelmed by the multitude. Six or seven of the chief priests entered the court with him, and one of them insisted on going in on his mule. An officer of my acquaintance, who happened to be there on the spot, prevented him. He said that the ordinary attendants of his majesty seemed quite to have lost sight of their duty to their sovereign, and were occupied in paying their devotion to the syyud. The shah came to the door of the court to receive him, and the enthusiasm of the populace seemed to be communicated to the royal hearts, as the shah and the prince royal wept bitterly in speaking of the misfortunes of the faithful under the tyranny of the Russian government. To Aga Syyud Mahomed, and his suite of one thousand Moollahs, were assigned a separate encampment. Two princes, by order of the shah, pitched near him, professedly to pre-



vent the intrusion of the people, but secretly to subdue too general a manifestation of public esteem and consideration. Another strong detachment of holy men came in from Kerbela, covered with winding sheets, and the heads of the religion of most of the principal cities flocked to the capital of the empire.

“The shah twice visited the syud; and on one occasion, his majesty said, ‘I am anxious to shed the small spoonful of blood that remains in my weak body in this holy cause; and it is my wish to have in my winding sheet a written evidence from you, that the inquiring angels may at once recognise my zeal, forgive my sins, and admit, without delay, my entrance into heaven.’”

Aga Syyud Mahomed watched the progress of the campaign with the utmost anxiety, and he no sooner heard of its disastrous results, than he dropped down a dead man!

The plague made its first appearance at Ganja in the year 1805, at Tiflis in 1806, and at Erivan in 1825. From those years down to the period I was in Georgia, the country

had (with the exception of the mountainous districts, which are rarely visited) been regularly afflicted. From this it would appear that the disease is endemial to the Russians, for it is a singular fact, that previously to their occupation of Georgia, the whole country was exempted from this pestilence, which is generally checked by the summer heats and winter frosts. But I may further observe, that among the anomalies of this fearful disease, and which I have before alluded to, is the circumstance of its having raged unchecked in the very severe winter of 1829, throughout nearly all the Caucasian villages. The consequences were of course fatal in a country where no medical practitioners, and therefore no means to lessen the mortality of the disorder, are to be found. Speaking to Prince Galitzin on the subject, whilst we were at Tiflis, he said, "I assure you we do not lose half so many men as you may be inclined to suppose; for whenever a man is reported to be infected, we plunge him in *iced-water*, wash all his linen, and on the second or third day

he is sure to be convalescent." It has been said that Mahommedanism is never free from plague ("that arrow that flieth by day" *), and that it takes its circuit through the dominions that bow down before the great impostor. If not in Georgia and Circassia, it is in Turkey; if not in Turkey, it scourges Egypt. Stamboul, however, is its head quarters. It enjoys a fatal privilege. Marching steadily onwards, it seizes all, consumes all, until the fuel is exhausted, and the grave quenches its consumption. At the moment when it was supposed to have been almost extinguished in Egypt, it suddenly broke out in India, where it raged (and still rages) with more than its original fierceness. May Divine Providence avert the coming of such an awful visitation to England!

* Psalm, xci. 5.

CHAPTER VI.

Hired Mourners—Abundant Game—Herds of Antelopes—A Successful Shot—Sheesha—Massacre of Russians—Gorouzour—Region of Snow—Pheasants of the Araxes—Boundary Line—Remarks of Napoleon—Ambitious Schemes of Russia—Invasion of India—The Araxes—Baron Rennenkampff—Ancient Bridges—Innumerable Adders—Oriental Encampments.

ON the morning of the 8th of February, we quitted Ganja for Zodi, about four leagues distant. On leaving the town we passed a group of women, who appeared in extreme grief. Approaching nearer, we saw that they were sitting round a grave, and mourning the loss of a deceased relative. Some were weeping aloud, whilst others beat their breasts with great *apparent* violence. These latter were hired for the occasion, a most common practice in Europe and America, as well as in Asia. Scriptural passages prove that the custom is of very great antiquity. “The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon

the ground, and keep silence; they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth: the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground." (Lamentations, ii. 10). The prophet Isaiah thus alludes to the desolation of Judah—"She being desolate, shall sit upon the ground." (Isaiah iii. 26). Many other passages in the Old Testament allude to the custom of hiring people to lament at funerals *. I have read some where or other of it being the practice in Ireland to hire old women to roar and cry; and at the window of every undertaker's shop in London we read the words "*funerals performed!*" It may be added, as a striking fact, that I found, during my travels into Chaldæa, a large Roman coin of copper, that represented Judea under the figure of a woman sitting beneath a palm-tree in the attitude of grief!

* Turn to the sixteenth chapter of Jeremiah, and in Baruch, verse 132—"They roar and cry before the gods, as men do at the feast when one is dead."

We now proceeded over an extensive plain, which had a wild heathy aspect, interspersed with irregular hills of gravel, covered with tufts of dry prickly herbage, and withered aromatic plants, among which were vast numbers of florican, bustard, and the black-breasted partridge (*perdix picta*). The Persians declare that this last bird never roosts, but inhabits the low furze, in the most uncultivated tracts of country. It measures eleven inches. After a ride of several miles, we crossed the Kourak in front of some very snowy hills, which presented one untracked surface. Here, the shahzadeh, who was a keen sportsman, obtained some capital shooting with one of Joe Manton's best guns. We went cheerily on, over a succession of undulating hills and dales, until we reached our halting place for the night about four o'clock P. M.

Whilst Mrs. Mignan and myself were strolling about our encampment, we were joined by Doctor Cormick, who seeing such immense flocks of florican could not resist the

temptation and the pleasure of destroying a few. He went for his gun, and crawling along the ground upon all fours until he got pretty close to a flock, he let fly at them, and down came seven at one shot. Cormick always declared that he could approach as near as he liked to any bird in this manner, but that if he walked upright he never had any sport at all. Our table literally groaned under the wild ducks, partridges, quails, floricans, and bustards, which were daily sent us by the prince and Mr. Cormick. Whoever adopts this route to India, will find many modes of dissipating the tedium of his journey, as game of every description is inconceivably abundant; the streams afford excellent fishing, and salmon, carp, white barbel, and trout, are most plentiful.

We left Zodi about seven the next morning, still traversing the plain in a southerly direction. The country, though so extensive, presented no change in its appearance, except that the hills stood thicker and higher. The

weather was delightfully mild as we passed close along the base of the Aligez mountains*, whose sloping sides were covered with hamlets and enclosures, forming a most agreeable contrast to the barren rocks above. Continuing our march, we saw flocks of mountain sheep, the chamois, and wild goats; and immense herds of antelopes were bounding and skipping across the plain with the rapidity of lightning flashes. I should say there were fifty or sixty at least scurrying into the brushwood; but we soon let slip the dogs, and our steeds having a fine even plain before them, kept well up. The Persians enjoyed the "shikar;" although at full gallop, it was *bang, bang*, right, and left, as fast as they could load. At length, one poor animal finding the dogs gaining upon him, made for the hills with redoubled speed, when Khosrou Mirza, who

* On the summit of this mountain range, sulphur runs in the form of stalactites, which the natives detach, and bring down by musket shot. This kind of sulphur is nearly as transparent as yellow amber.

was in the way as he repassed within musket-shot, fired and wounded him so severely, that the greyhounds were on him before he could traverse another thirty yards. He was placed on the back of a mule, and proved a capital addition to our travelling stock of provisions.

The size of this animal exceeded any I ever saw in India. Its colour was fawn, with a light streak passing from the shoulders to the haunches, and a lighter shade of fawn extending to the belly, which was not so white as the Indian antelope (*Antilope Cervicapra* of Pallas). Its ears were remarkably short, though its horns extended to a great length, and were surrounded by several rings.

We descended due east, over a stony and difficult road, which wound through several rocky defiles; and, crossing the river Terter, reached a small Mahommedan village named Sauk-Boulak. Here we halted for the night, and slept under the roof of a hospitable Musulman: he roasted a sheep *whole*, and gave

us some excellent coffee. On the morning of the 10th we left our kind host, who appeared glad to see us depart, for he was frightened out of his wits by the fierce looks and glittering arms of the envoy's followers. We now set forth over a road leading due south, and passed a little to the westward of Sheesha, the capital of the province of Karabaugh. This city is built on the summit of a lofty mountain, which has a very difficult ascent. Its fortifications enclose the summit of the mountain to an extent of at least four miles, but like every other fortress throughout the country, it has been allowed to fall into decay. The Russians were invited here in the year 1804 by a Persian nobleman, who rebelled against his sovereign, and who was shot by a party of these same Russians, together with two ladies of his harem. They, however disavowed all knowledge of the event, and his son was appointed governor of the province, who continued a faithful ally. Subsequently they compelled *him* to quit the country, and confiscated all his estates. In 1826 the whole

of Karabaugh rose *en masse* against the Russians, who were massacred to a man, but the country was ruined, and since its cession to the Autocrat has fallen both in population and revenue. There are about thirty thousand families at present residing in Karabaugh, mostly Armenians, who have emigrated from northern Persia to reside under the protection of Russia.

On our way past Sheesha, we saw several Cossack stations, where General Rennenkampff changed his baggage horses. These posts consisted of a few miserable straw huts, whose inmates (all of them soldiers) were performing the most menial offices. As we rode along, they took off their caps and saluted us. The peasants followed their example, and looked ridiculous enough with their closely shaved heads.

The weather, which for the last week had been so mild, became suddenly extremely cold and boisterous, with a cloudy sky, and seven degrees of frost. Our road lay over an uneven plain for nine miles, when we ascended

a hill to the south east; and passing over it, came down its opposite side by a romantic lane. We passed along the banks of the river Parianzour, followed its course for two miles, and entered a deep forest. The brush-wood through which we wound was covered to the depth of two feet with snow, and the difficulty our steeds encountered from such insecure footing increased at every step. We now followed the ridge of a chain of rugged hills, exposed to so cold a wind that we could scarcely face it, while the road itself was slippery and dangerous. At the end of about fifteen miles, we reached Gorouzour, where some fresh Cossack horses were taken. We here found the peasants comfortably hutted; the structure of their huts was very simple. Several long rods, driven into the ground at a distance of two feet asunder, enclosing a space about fifteen feet in diameter, composed the outwork. From the top of these, long willow twigs sloped to the centre, tied together with goat or camel hair rope; these formed the frame-work of the roof, over which was

thrown a covering of thick brown felt. A similar casing encircled the sides, and the whole was bound externally with cane-work closely matted together.

On the morrow a region of snow lay spread out before us; hill and valley were encased, as we had ascended considerably for many days past, and the climate had much changed. We hurried on to Koubat, which lay about eighteen miles in a south-westerly direction. It was a wretched place, though whatever the country produced was most freely given. We left the hamlet with the cold at eight degrees of Reaumur, and as we proceeded, came to a narrow valley which gradually contracted into a rocky gorge of very steep and rugged acclivities. At the base ran a stream, whose deep broad-bed proved that its waters, in summer, swelled to an impassable height; but at the present moment they were dwindled down to a mere rill, which gurgled amongst rocks and stones, whilst we journeyed by its side, contemplating the beauty of the overhanging cliffs. We

rode along it for upwards of a mile, and then came upon a small plain which appeared to be completely surrounded by lofty mountains. Through an immense chasm to the east, I caught a distinct view of the windings of the Araxes. Herds of antelopes were bounding over the precipitous sides of the mountains, and pheasants, which are seldom seen to the south of this river, were in great numbers. This beautiful inhabitant of the banks of the Araxes deserves to be particularly noticed. When full grown, its length is about two feet and a half. The wings, from the shoulder to the extreme end, measure eight inches; length of beak, from the gape to the tip, an inch and an half, and the tail thirteen inches. Its arched beak is as hard as the rock; the space around the eye is studded with numerous papillæ of a bright red colour; the back of the neck is grey, and barred with innumerable black lines, which vary in breadth. Its breast and belly are black, and its tail, which is most gracefully curved, has both black and white feathers.

Its legs are red, and furnished with round sharp spurs.

An hour and a half more brought us to the margin of the Araxes*, near the fine old bridge of Khuda Auferine; at which point the power of the grasping Czar ceases, for the present. How long this may continue to be the boundary line between Persia and Russia, and whether it be politic for us still to remain inactive spectators of these rapid advances and encroachments of the Russians, instead of checking their course, requires our most serious consideration. I may, however, remark in this place, that very great strides towards the seizure and occupation of the whole of northern Persia are in actual contemplation. Russia is too mighty

* The limits of Armenia, as it had been ceded to the Emperor Maurice, extended as far as the Araxes: the river submitted to the *indignation* of a bridge, and Heraclius, in the footsteps of Mark Antony, advanced towards the city of Tauris, or Gandzaca, the ancient and modern capital of one of the provinces of Media. (*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, chap. xlv. p. 811).

to remain at rest ; she must go on increasing, or she will shake to pieces!

Every one remembers the interview between Napoleon and Mr. Ellis, at St. Helena. The ex-emperor commenced this subject by saying—

“ Eh bien, comment se porte mon ami le Shah? It was I, who shewed you the way to Persia. What have the Russians been doing lately in that quarter?”

On being informed that the result of the late war had been the cession of all the territory in the military occupation of their troops, he said:—

“ Yes, Russia is the power now most to be dreaded. Alexander may have whatever army he pleases. Unlike the French and English, the subjects of the Russian empire improve their condition by becoming soldiers. If I called on a Frenchman to quit his country, I required him to abandon his happiness. The Russian, on the contrary, is a slave while a peasant, but becomes free and respectable when a soldier. Their

immense bodies of Cossacks are also formidable; their mode of travelling resembles the Bedouins of the desert; they advance with confidence into the most unknown regions."

Many years cannot possibly elapse before a consummation of these notions shall be brought about, for the facility with which Russia might permanently post herself in Persia is quite surprising. Her insulting remark, " We will negotiate with the English at Bombay," is of course mere bravado; but be the intention of her government what it may, all Russian officers, during our association with them, spoke of the final possession of *hostile* Persia as an ultimate object of her policy; and if we are wise, and study our political interests, we should firmly oppose and annihilate this dangerous policy, and all those ambitious schemes which have already led her myriads of barbaric horsemen into Turkey and Circassia—into Georgia and northern Persia.

On the subject of a Russian invasion of India, through Persia and Bokhara, a late

number of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine contains some very striking remarks. "Fictitious possession," says the reviewer, "of the golden peninsula would be impossible, but a Russian invasion must produce hazard and havoc incalculable. No native Russian army could meet the powerful and disciplined force which holds British India. Pitched battles would rapidly show the inferiority of the Russian serf to the British soldier, or even to the Indian led on by British bravery. But it would be a war, not of science, but of universal confusion, not of brave men in the fair field, but of barbarians, untameable as their own storms and snows, overwhelming the whole territory in one vast wave. The troops of Timour and Gengiz are lying idle in the desert. But India is their natural prey. The sound of the Russian trumpet, that called them in our time even to the remote and iron struggle with France, and was echoed from both sides of the Ural, would be obeyed with still fiercer exultation when it called them to the near and luxurious spoil of India, the land of their

hereditary triumphs, and bound up with all their remembrances of the great chieftains who had made the Tartar spear the terror of the world. An inexhaustible population, of which every man is a soldier, would be poured into the bosom of India. The country now lies like a great sea in a reluctant calm. But its nature is agitation; and the first plunge of the Tartar tribes from the ridge of the Himmaleh would rouse every clan and province, from the mountains of Cape Comorin, into a clash and convulsion of war, indescribable and immeasurable."

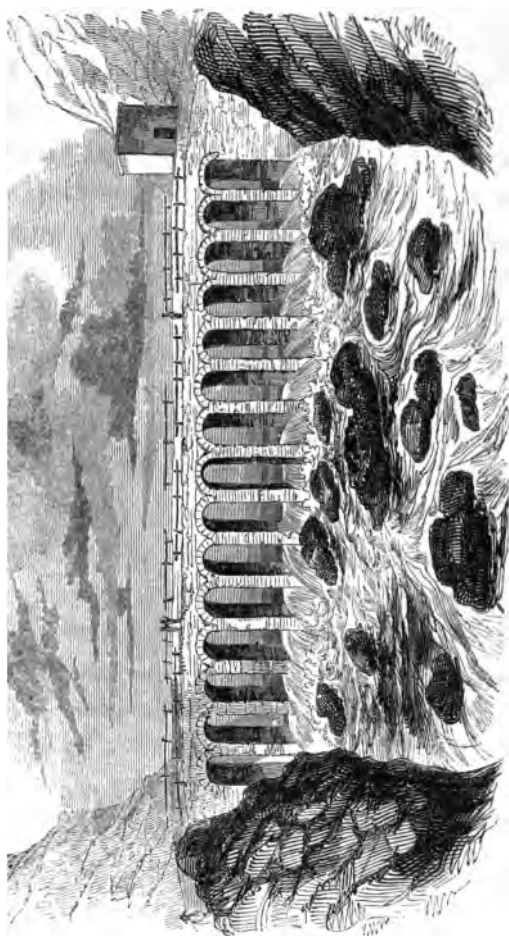
Through the kindness of Prince Khosrou's Russian mehmaundar, we were accommodated in tents pitched upon the banks of the river Araxes, as on neither side were any villages situated. From this point the stream takes a direction nearly east, and is quite shut in by the mountains of Karabaugh on the left bank, and those of Karadaugh on the right. It is studded with islands, which belong to the party to whose banks they are nearest. Hence, those situated by the right bank are the property of Persia, whilst those

on the left bank are claimed by Russia. From the verge of the stream I observed that its utmost velocity in the most obstructed channels was about five miles the hour; while through the broad and shallow passages the river ran at the rate of three miles only, in proportion to its depth. There are many shallows from September until March; but from April until August, the Araxes is nowhere fordable.

General Baron Rennenkampff, took leave of our party at this point. The envoy presented him with a bag containing twelve hundred ducats, and two pair of handsome Cashmere shawls. The baron's polite attentions to the whole suite were unremitting throughout. I beg thus publicly to record my gratitude for all his kindness to us. He was very desirous to cross the boundary line, and to accompany us to the court of his Royal Highness Prince Abbas Mirza, with the view of forming the acquaintance of our highly respected ambassador Sir John Kinneir; but the orders of the emperor were so

positive, he could not even transport the shahzadeh's carriage *across* the river. His fear, also, of being more favourable to the Persian court than to his own employers was excessive. Born a Livonian, he was eyed with envy and jealousy by all his inferiors in rank, who, if any opportunity served them, would doubtless have endeavoured to injure his good name and interest with the government. On bidding us farewell, and pressing my hand, he said—"As the emperor has every confidence in me at present I must try to retain it; the Russians hate all my countrymen most cordially, because some of us hold the best appointments in the empire."

It was a lovely morning when we "broke ground," and quitted our encampment to cross the Araxes. On reaching its picturesque banks, we found the river about three hundred and fifty feet broad. We passed over the bridge of Khuda Auferine, erected on a ridge of rocks over which the river falls. The descent is gradual, and the fall itself does not exceed five or six feet.



BRIDGE OVER THE ARAVES.

The vestiges of a second bridge stood a short way above this, and, like it, was also built upon a ridge of rocks, over which the river dashed at the rate of about seven miles an hour, and had worn their surface to a smoothness of polish which art could scarcely give. The infinite variety of their positions reflected the rays of an unclouded sun from every point like dark steel mirrors*.

A little to the eastward lies the great desert of Mogaum†, situated in the district of Burzund, which, during the months of June and July, is nearly impassable from the innumerable adders which cover its surface. Plutarch says, that when Pompey the Great

* The river Araxes is noisy, rapid, and vehement, and, with the melting of the snows, irresistible: the strongest and most massy bridges are swept away by the current; and its *indignation* (et pontem indignatus Araxes. Virg. *Æneid.* lib. viii. v. 728) is attested by the ruins of many arches near the old town of Zulfa. (Voyages de Chardin, tom. i. p. 252).

† The heath of Mogaum, lying between the Koor and the Araxes, is sixty parasangs in length, and twenty in breadth. (Olearius, page 1023).

had overcome the Albanians, he wished to pursue them to the shores of the Caspian, but was reluctantly obliged to abandon his design, in consequence of the immense number of snakes which covered the intervening plain *. Gibbon, however, doubts the existence of venomous reptiles on this heath, as related by Pliny; but the fact is notorious. It was the favourite encampment of many an Oriental prince †.

* Pompey designed to make his way to the Caspian Sea, and march by its coasts into Hyrcania; but he found the number of venomous serpents so troublesome, that he was forced to return, when three days' march more would have carried him as far as he proposed. (Vide Plutarch's *Life of Pompey*. Vol. iv. p. 159).

† See the *Encampments of Nadir Shah, and Timour*, translated from Persian manuscripts by Sir William Jones.

CHAPTER VII.

Wild Country—Village of Khomorloo—View of the Araxes—
Approach to Molaun—Miserable Hamlet—Mountain Track—
Sublime View—An Accident—Dangerous Spot—Plain of Ahar
—Town of Ahar—Persian Excesses—"Hara" of Scripture—
Volcanic Mountain—Tomb on its Summit—Astrological Divina-
tion—Wretched Quarters—Approach to Tabriz—Mahommed
Ali Khan—His English Wife—Russian Diplomats.

ON leaving the Araxes, the country assumed an awfully wild aspect. It consisted of lofty mountains, split asunder by narrow craggy ravines, and wooded valleys accessible only through rocky gorges and defiles. Its natural strength is indescribably great, and its inhabitants have always preserved a partial independence. They have been often defeated, but never subdued; and, although tributary to Abbas Mirza, the Governor of Azerbi-jaun, are in general free. In fact the country is almost impracticable, and of very easy defence.

Having traversed a narrow plain on the

river's border, of about three miles in extent, we arrived at the foot of a steep bank, which we ascended, and travelled on a fersung, or four miles further, in a southerly direction, when we gladly saw the village of Khomorloo, situated upon a deep ravine, between steep calcareous and barren mountains. The dwellings of the villagers were scooped from the sides of a mountain, which formed three sides of each hut, the fourth being a wall of mud, in which an aperture of four feet square was left, and a few miserable planks tied together served for the door: the whole covered over by rafters, and a thin coating of flat thatch. They had the character of being plunderers and assassins, but excused their depredations by pretending that the whole country were at war with them. Had we not been with the prince, we dared not have trusted to their hospitality. They appeared the poorest people we had yet seen. Both sexes were clad in rags, and the children to the age of seven were *tous nuds*. They possessed a few sheep and goats, and a good supply of grapes, which

they had preserved all the winter: these had the same bloom and freshness as though they had been recently plucked; the stalks alone were withered. The villagers preserved them in caverns, each bunch being tied and hung separately. The vines grew between the clefts of the rocks, also the wild rose, wild plum, the barberry, raspberry, and jasmine, which is used for making chibouques.

I ascended a lofty eminence behind the village, which commanded an admirable view of the Araxes. No outlet for the stream appeared in any direction; the bending of the river's banks enclosing the opposite points, gave it the appearance of a lake completely land-locked, while detached rocks, rising at a distance in a pyramidal form, increased the beauty of the prospect.

Quitting these poor borderers, who were ground and crushed by the envoy's followers like corn between the upper and nether millstones, we proceeded in an easterly direction, crossing the bed of a river, or rather a mountain torrent, in which the actual stream of water when we passed was not above twelve

feet in breadth, though the channel itself was at least a hundred. It appeared to wind towards the Araxes, into which river it must disembogue itself, at about twelve miles to the eastward of the old bridge.

We travelled onwards to a village called Molaun, about seventeen miles to the southward of Khomorloo. The general direction of the track was to the eastward of south. The country continued singularly wild; indeed, our path, for there was no road, lay over a succession of mountains, which stretched in continual lines as far as the view extended. The rocks were nearly denuded of soil: a few bushes of the melancholy though beautiful wild cypress, and some stunted oaks, comprised the whole of the vegetable world at this bleak season. The approach to the village was very rugged and dangerous for our yaboos* and mules. From this place the direction of our road varied from south-east to south-south-east for a distance of twelve miles, to the hamlet of Rooswar, which

* Yaboo, a stout pony used like mules for carrying burdens.

stood in a gloomy and desolate valley. Not a tree or shrub marked the course of the stream which supplied the inhabitants with water. All bespoke misery and distrust. The surrounding hills were infested by a number of predatory tribes. Our host, whose poverty was perhaps his greatest crime, told us that he had lost his daughter on the preceding night. The robbers had stolen her in lieu of tribute! At this place, we certainly had an opportunity of observing the extreme misery of the peasantry, who, in addition to heavy taxes by which they were already oppressed, were subject to such perpetual depredation from freebooters, that those who were not already ruined by contribution and pillage, found it prudent to assume an appearance of the most abject wretchedness, as their only security against further exactions.

We found the people always ready to give whatever they possessed. Hesitation would only have brought on them the ill-usage of the envoy's followers. His excellency gave us *carte blanche*, to help ourselves to what-

ever we fancied—all our supplies were provided gratis.

Our track still lay over an uninterrupted succession of mountains, and was almost impracticable for loaded cattle. Caravans never attempt this line of route. They enter Persia by Erivan and Nackshiwaun *, the plains of Ararat, and Morund, which is said to represent the ancient city of Moranda. The second mother of mankind, the wife of Noah, is supposed to be interred here.

We continued ascending until mid-day,

* Erivan is an Armenian word, which signifies “discovered,” or “they appear.” From this quarter Noah saw the loftiest peak of Ararat rising above the waters of the deluge. (Genesis, viii. 5.) Nackshiwaun, also, is regarded by the Armenians as the most ancient city in the world, and as having been the first abode of the human race, founded and inhabited by the patriarch Noah and his children after the deluge, when they left the ark on Mount Ararat. Some traces of the national tradition are to be found in a passage of Josephus, who says, that the place where Noah and his family fixed themselves, on quitting the ark, is called by the inhabitants “Apobarition,” which is nearly a translation of the word Nackshiwaun.

when, on reaching the summit of the loftiest peak, a most beautiful scene suddenly and unexpectedly burst upon our view. Far in the rear, successive ranges of fantastically shaped mountains sloped gradually down to the more level country which marked the banks of the Araxes. Upon the extreme and broken line of the horizon, the lofty hills of the fruitful province of Karabaugh arose in towering grandeur, whilst immense piles of rock in the foreground, appearing as if they had been flung by some volcanic action into the air, completed the sublimity of the scene. The general direction of these ranges seemed nearly east and west; their outlines in Karabaugh were more even, and their summits less elevated than those of Karadaugh; for we saw no snow on the former, whereas the latter presented extensive patches of the purest white. The northern sides of both these ridges might, however, be more thickly covered with snow, from their being less exposed to the dissolving influence of the sun. The great eastern plain

of Mogaum presented an horizon like the sea, broken only by small eminences arising like cliffs and islets out of the seeming water.

We continued to pass some barren hills, and felt the weather excessively keen. Our beards were frozen, and the nostrils of the baggage-horses completely choked up with ice-balls, which compelled us to halt continually and rub them off. I cannot describe what we suffered from thirst, and the dazzling reflection of the sun's rays upon the snow. It tanned our faces to such a degree, that we could not wash without suffering much pain. The baggage-cattle were always kept in the rear to prevent any obstruction being offered to our advance; but by some unknown chance, at a broad part of the track, one of the yaboos had preceded the cavalcade, and was just in advance of Mrs. Mignan's horse, when in a moment, and without a struggle, it fell down a perpendicular precipice of several hundred feet. Mrs. Mignan instantly stopped, and waited until I dismounted to assist her down, as the

path was so worn away that, had even no accident happened, she would have been afraid to pass so dangerous a spot. Indeed, every one of the Persian horsemen dismounted here. The drivers were obliged to retrace their steps for a great distance, until they found a place where they could descend to recover the load, which was a box containing the body of one of the suite who had died before we reached Tiflis, and who, having been well spiced by the prince's *maître de cuisine*, was now on his way to "holy ground" for interment.

It was high noon when we arrived at a small village called Dombry, where we were served with lubbun, or curdled sour milk. In three hours from Dombry, we descended the rugged mountains which bound the northern face of the Ahar plain. The ranges appeared to be a branch of Mount Caucasus, whose ramifications encircle the territories of Erivan and Nackshiwaun, and here took an easterly direction. About three miles to the southward we saw a few trees standing on the brow of a

hill. These we were told surrounded the town of Ahar, and were now remarkable objects; for, since leaving the shores of the Araxes, with the exception of a few hilly tracks in the vicinity of Rooswar, we had scarcely seen a tree. We wound along the plain of Ahar for nearly an hour, and opened a full view of a river winding to the westward. Descending more to the south, over deep snow, we came near the water's edge. Here was a ruined building, with a domed top, and some arches in its walls: it was perhaps a Mahommedan tomb. We went hence to the westward, along the northern bank of the stream, over a flat shelving shore, when we came immediately opposite to Ahar, which stands on the southern side of the river.

We found no difficulty in crossing, for the greatest depth did not appear to be more than five feet. Its waters were extremely turbid, more so than those of the Koor, and much their inferior in taste, although sufficiently wholesome for culinary purposes. The town of Ahar is the capital of Karadaugh, or

the “Black Mountain,” as the whole district is designated. It contains about six hundred houses, and from five to six thousand inhabitants. Its streets are narrow, but clean; and many of its houses are adorned with Persian inscriptions bearing the dates of their erection. There is a burial ground on the southern side of the town, with cypresses thinly scattered over its extent; the tombstones were mostly fallen, and worn with age. The town is under the dominion of his Royal Highness Prince Abbas Mirza, and is governed by his eldest son Mahommed Mirza, who then had only a few personal attendants. The reception he gave his younger brother was like that of a slave to his master, and the manner in which this “sprig of nobility” treated his entertainer in return, was quite *à la Persienne*; or, in other words, much in the spirit of the despotic shah whom he served. The quarters which were provided for us were most excellent, and our host, a lively and intelligent Persian holding the office of *ferosh bashee* to the governor.

gave us the best of every thing. He was most anxious to hear how his countrymen had behaved during their late mission, and, on my assuring him that they all got dead drunk every night of their lives, he exclaimed, "Would to God, Prince Khosrou had permitted me to accompany him! what delights I have lost! In your company I might have committed any excesses with impunity!" I told him the debauchees of Europe would have stood no chance with the young prince, and that his proceedings since we had crossed the frontiers had been confined to sheep-stealing and village-plundering. These little foibles had been perpetrated in so genteel a manner that they only gave *éclat* to his pedigree. Our host remarked with a laugh, that such practices were the inevitable consequences of his calling, and that all the Kujur family, including the old shah himself, had indulged in them before. He seemed to think that the axiom "*Il faut vivre*" was a very compulsory one in Persia.

I inquired if the prince royal had been lately performing the same sort of achievements?

“Even so,” replied my host; “his highness has been gathering in his due to pay the troops.” “You mean,” I rejoined, “for the support of his numerous harems. May he reap an abundant harvest.”

“God’s will be done,” continued the Persian, “a few hundred men can do any thing.” In this, however, he was woefully mistaken, for we afterwards heard that the “few hundred men” had been attacked by a superior force from the hills, and nearly the whole of his highness’s “*posse comitatus*” laid on the field. So much for rent-collecting in Persia.

The height of Ahar above the level of the Caspian Sea, cannot be less than five thousand feet. Morier thinks that it represents the Hara of Scripture. “And the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, and the spirit of Tilgath-Pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and

the half tribe of Manasseh, and brought them unto Halah, and Habor, and HARA, and to the river Gozan, unto this day." (1 Chron. v. 26.)

Our position appeared so close to the celebrated volcanic mountain called Savallan, that I wished to attempt its ascent, but the villagers assured me it was at least thirty-five miles off, and that there was no regular road leading to it. The Persians have a great veneration for it, and its name is said to be derived from a descendant of the Prophet. They add, that his body still lies in one of its chasms, in high preservation. I have since heard from Mr. James Prinsep, the talented editor of the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, that Lieutenant-Colonel Shee, commandant of the British detachment in Persia, effected its ascent, and that, after a scramble of five hours, he reached the summit. On the top of the mountain he found a tomb in which was the skeleton of a man lying with his head and body inclining to the right side (turning towards Mecca); the front

half of the skull, the left collar bone, the left arm, from the shoulder to the elbow, with four ribs on the left side, were alone visible: some dried flesh and pieces of the winding sheet were still adhering to the skeleton. The remainder of the body was buried in ice and earth. The skull was perfect, except some of the front teeth, which were lying about the tomb; twenty teeth were still in their places, perfectly even and beautifully white. Many of the wandering tribes declare that on the summit of Mount Savallan the ark of Noah rested, and they describe the curiosities around it as being very numerous. Savallan is the loftiest mountain in Northern Persia, it stands thirteen thousand feet above the level of the Caspian Sea; its peak is surmounted with a wreath of snow, whose border is beautifully fringed and fantastically shaped.

Whilst we were smoking our kaleoons immediately before Savallan, with a bright moon throwing her silver touches along the line of its rugged points, I was apprised that

the prince's astrologer * had been examined the stars, and that, according to his divination, the suite could not "break ground" until the expiration of *seventy hours*. It was therefore that he quit the gates at midnight, to enable the prince's envoy to enter his father's capital precisely *seventy hours* and a half after sunrise, that being a very lucky moment according to astrological calculation. This caused me to arrange my own movements so as to complete the remainder of the journey alone, and we left the city at noon on the 22d of February, amidst a thick mist, which at this time of the year is common to northern Persia.

* The influence which astrology has over the minds of all Orientals is too well known to require a particular notice in this place. But it may be as well to say that the science is a very profitable one in Persia. Sir Malcolm, in the second volume of his *History of Persia*, mentions an instance of a Persian ambassador, when about to embark for India, was compelled by an astrologer to throw down several high walls, in that he might be enabled to quit the town without passing under an *invisible* constellation, which would in such a case have marred his good fortune.

After having passed the suburbs, the fog cleared off, when we crossed the plain in a westerly direction. Upon our left appeared the lofty Savallan with its snow-covered walls of rock. Although the sun's last beams had quitted our airy position, they still illumined the peak which

“ ——— stood before us

A mount of snow fretted with golden pinnacles.”

At nightfall we reached a hamlet seated on an eminence called Shehruk, and halted for the night. The people here spoke the Turkish language, and appeared much chagrined on finding we could not converse with them.

Our next day's menzil was made at Khojah, likewise seated on a hill, and beside a salt stream, the property of our friend Mirza Baba, *hakim bashee* to the Mission. Our quarters here were most wretched, and, to complete our entire misery, the fleas, which had been our constant tormentors, were as voracious as bull-dogs; we could find nothing to prevent their biting us the whole

night, though the people spoke of a strong scented grass which drove them away. The Asiatic, however, suffers very slightly from their sting; the blood of the European is decidedly preferred.

On the 24th, we started early for Tabriz. The weather continued so very cold, that whatever was moistened by the breath immediately became ice. My hair and mustachios were hung with icicles, literally verifying the words of the poet:—

“Stiriaque impexis induruit horrida barbis.”

We crossed a salt desert, through which several brackish streams flowed. The whole tract appeared as if it had been recently abandoned by the ocean. The latter part of the march was unusually rugged; I can remember no country that exceeds in difficulty the mountain ranges of Karadaugh.

On reaching the gates of Tabriz, we were met by my excellent friend Major Hart, generalissimo of the Persian army, who accompanied us to a residence, which he had en-

gaged for us, of Mahommed Ali Khan, a noble of Persia, as, in consequence of the increased indisposition of Sir John Kinneir, he was unable to receive us into his palace.

The khan had spent many years in England, to learn the art of gun-making, under Wilkinson of Pall-mall ; and Major Hart told me he had shewn great skill and ability in his profession. His late Majesty George the Fourth had, with his usual munificence, given the khan four hundred guineas for a twisted gun-barrel, executed in imitation of the beautiful workmanship of Damascus.

Before he returned to Persia he married an Englishwoman, whom we now saw. Although permitted to receive the visits of all British travellers, she was obliged to conform to the customs of Islamism. We found her utterly destitute of the personal charms of our western *Peris*, so much esteemed by the good taste of the Persians.

She passed nearly the whole of her time with the princesses of the royal harem, and had an only daughter, who it was agreed

should marry one of the younger branches of the prince royal's family. This young girl was very good looking, and, like her father, a strict Mahommedan.

Mrs. Mahommed Ali felt anxious to revisit her native country, to which the khan was not averse. He agreed that during her absence she should receive from him three hundred pounds per annum; but, said he, "I know your people better than you do. You will be very unhappy; you want to shew them your collection of dresses and shawls with which the princesses have presented you; if you don't give them all up to your relations, and spend plenty of money upon them, they will pay you no attention, nor even be glad to see you." He added, "You will no sooner reach England than you will wish to return here again: what do you suppose the English people know or care about the Persian harems?"

We found a large assemblage here, Sir Henry and Lady Willock, their brothers Major (Madras cavalry) and Captain Willock, of the royal navy, Doctor and Mrs.

Neil, Sir John and Lady Campbell, Captain Macdonald, Conolly, Strong, Chalon, and others of the army of India. The *corps diplomatique* of the Russian government, headed by Prince Dolgoruckii, were even more numerous than the whole of our party, and the national feeling of these "innocents" led them to devote their best energies to make up for the political importance we *once* unchingly possessed in a superlative degree throughout this extensive kingdom. It is, I fear, all *up* with us here. .

CHAPTER VIII.

Antiquity of Tabriz—Its Population—Cowardly Chiefs—Major Hart—Abbas Mirza's Army—Russian Intrigue—English Policy—Russian Ambition—Augmentation of Russian Territory—Russian Ascendency—English Apathy—Russia Accessible—Russian Vanity—Military Boasting—The Russian Empire—Russia and Persia—Policy of the Georgians—Hostility to Russia—The Russian Army—Coalition against Russia.

THE antiquity of Tabriz, or Tauris, as it is universally called by foreigners, is very great, and the extent of its ruins prodigious. Out of two hundred and fifty mosques mentioned by Sir John Chardin, the remains of three only are to be traced. The finest of these, and the highest in Persia (upwards of one hundred feet), is that of *Ali Kaja*, erected by him at least six hundred years ago. When Chardin visited it, the city alone contained five hundred and fifty thousand persons:—
 “J’ai fait beaucoup de diligence pour apprendre à combien se monte le nombre des habitans de Tauris; je ne pouvais pourtant pas le savoir au juste: mais je pense qu’on

ITS POPULATION.

peut dire sûrement qu'il va à 550 mille personnes*." At present the whole province of Azerbijaun (the richest and most fertile in Persia) could not muster more. Such is the effect of storm and time. spoliation by power, and destruction by earthquake. Gibbon says, that instead of half a million of inhabitants which have been ascribed to Tauris, under the reign of the Sophys, the city contained no more than three thousand houses; but the value of the royal treasures was enhanced by a tradition that they were the spoils of Cræsus, which had been transported by Cyrus from the citadel of Sardes. Chardin ascribes the foundation of this city to Zobeide, the wife of the famous Kaliff Haroun-al-Raschid: but it is much more ancient, and the names of Gandzaca, Gazaca, and Gaza, are expressive of the royal treasure†.

* Chardin, Voyage de Paris à Ispahan, p. 184.

† Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, chap. xlv. p. 811. Youngman, 1830.

The court of his Royal Highness Abbas Mirza, prince royal of Persia, is held in this city. Of the fifty-five sons of his Persian majesty, the heir apparent to the throne is the only one who ever successfully attempted to raise a regular army. It continued in a most efficient state until the chiefs (who are the curses of the country) submitted to Count Paskewitch. These chiefs are the greatest cowards in Persia. When Paskewitch was in full march towards the city, and had arrived in sight of its walls, the chiefs swore upon the Koran that if the marshal entered Tabriz it should be over their own corse; that they would contend the ground with him inch by inch, and fight to the last man; yet no sooner had he reached the gates, than they threw them open for his admission, and congratulated him on his safe arrival. The first request which General Paskewitch made to our minister at the court of Teheraun was, that Major Hart should have no written or personal communications with Prince Abbas Mirza, and also,

that he was not to appear in public so long as the Russian forces might continue in possession of Tabriz. This request was communicated by our envoy to the gallant major, desiring it should be complied with, much to his disgust.

The short-sighted government of Persia can see no use in entertaining men who are not absolutely required, and has disbanded nearly the whole army, retaining only a few Russian deserters. The serviceable part of the establishment, however, consists of three British officers (Colonel Shee, Lieutenants Burgess and Christian) and eight serjeants, all of whom are under the immediate command of Major Isaac Hart, of her Majesty's 65th regiment of foot. Notwithstanding the insuperable difficulties which this indefatigable officer has encountered, he has single-handedly organised and held together all the troops of the prince royal; and for the last *sixteen* years, the name of HART has been the terror of every Russian soldier stationed on the frontier. The artillery has always been the most

efficient part of Abbas Mirza's army, and the infantry has been cantoned throughout the districts. The amount of the general disciplined force under the command of Major Hart, which *might* be collected, is about ten thousand men. Previously to the late disastrous war, fifteen battalions, each one thousand strong, were regularly clothed, equipped, and fed by his royal highness, together with nearly ten thousand irregulars, or Tuf-fungches: these are foot soldiers, armed with matchlocks, who are only *nominally* ready at a call, being dispersed throughout their own villages, where they are obliged to convert the sword into the plough-share to support their families. From the government they receive little or no pay; we cannot, therefore, be surprised at their never having evinced much readiness for field service, or any great firmness in action, especially as their wives and children are left, during their absence, totally unprovided with even the common necessities of life.

The introduction of our military tactics

and discipline into this country would long since have been superseded by those of Russia, had it not been for the unceasing exertions of Major Hart; and, when we take into account the horrid depravity into which Abbas Mirza has lately fallen, and his avaricious habits, it becomes a marvel how he continues to retain any forces at all: it may be added, as a fact, that the Russian government instructed its consul-general at Tabriz to offer the major a very large sum if he would quit the country. Count Paskewitch is so exceedingly jealous of our influence and intimacy with Persia and its government, and so anxious to dislodge us therefrom, that he actually tendered officers to drill the troops entirely at the expense of his own employers; and had it not been for Major Hart's local influence, the Persians would have accepted of their services. When this officer quits Persia, the whole army must swarm with Russians, whose ambassador will not fail to gain an effectual ascendancy.

Is this to be wondered at? The prince

royal has entreated the Indian governments to grant him officers upon their former terms. They would not listen to him; so that eventually he must accept the services of Russia. When that day arrives, our influence in Persia ceases, *perhaps* for ever.

I feel no hesitation in asserting that our interests in Persia have, through ignorance, timidity, or apathy, been grossly neglected or misunderstood. To judge from the vacillating and contradictory nature of our political proceedings in that country, it baffles human ingenuity to understand what our policy can really have been. Ostensibly, at least, our object has been to arrest the march of Russian ambition. Were we serious in our determination to curb the ambition of Russia, — did we really know *her* weakness, *our* own strength, and the political position and resources of these countries — we should at once declare to Russia that her boundary is the Cuban, beyond which she must not pass. She has no justifiable ground whatever for advancing her frontier to the Araxes, and for

possessing herself of the richest Persian provinces. When she advanced upon Circassia and Georgia, she attempted to justify her encroachment by asserting, that the predatory habits of those countries deserved punishment. This was mere pretence. Circassia and Georgia scarcely border upon her frontier at all: with the latter she finds it convenient to be at peace; but although the former wishes for a cessation of hostilities, she refuses all quarter, and requires its absolute subjugation. The cause is sufficiently obvious; by possessing the coast, Russia will eventually detach the whole of the Circassian tribes from every other connexion, so that they shall be incorporated with the rest of her empire, and her arms and commerce left in undisputed possession of the field.

At a period like the present, when a Russian army of one hundred thousand men, under the command of Field-marshal Count Paskevitch, is ordered to assemble on the frontiers of Mount Caucasus for field service*, it may

* See the *Times* newspaper for the month of May, 1838.

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not, perhaps, be considered inopportune to submit in this place a few observations made during two successive visits to Russia, on the present political state, as well as a plan for the attack, of that empire. Of the feasibility of their invading the north-western frontiers of India I shall speak elsewhere.

The Russian empire, *in toto*, presents a most extraordinary appearance. It consists of innumerable tribes and nations, who speak a great variety of languages. The two-headed eagle has stretched forth her talons to the north and south, to the east and west; has pounced upon her prey, and has held it fast in the grasp of despotism. For some hundred years, Russia has never been at rest, except for a period suitable to prepare her future means of attack, and await her projected aggrandizement. She has added province to province, principality to principality, and kingdom to kingdom; so that she has gradually augmented her territory to no less than seventeen times its former extent: by artful policy, and overawing armies, she has more and more consolidated her poli-

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tical power, and the influence of her despotic sway.

The rapidly progressive augmentation of Russian territory by seizure and conquest—the incredible increase of her population—the introduction of foreign colonies—the astonishing advance of her people in the arts and sciences, in philosophy and literature, general knowledge and civilization—the deeds of her arms, and her present enormous army of nearly half a million of men, one fourth of whom, at least, are chosen troops in a high state of discipline—the extraordinary, and I may add, unnatural and preponderating political influence, she has acquired in European courts—her rapid march in the improvement of her arm-manufactories, cannon-foundries, arsenals, and other appendages of warfare—the institution of various kinds of schools, civil and military, for the instruction of youth—the establishment of Bible societies even in the remotest regions—the self-conceit and haughty spirit of her nobles—the excessive

desire of aggrandizement characteristic of her sovereigns and her generals, her clergy and her slaves—her intriguing and perfidious policy in every court in which she has a representative or *employé*—her obdurate perseverance in the overthrow of the liberty of man in some once powerful nations, while she solemnly *professes* the wish to emancipate her own serfs—the corruption of her morals, and the superstition of her religion—are so many topics for meditation, but more especially for the attention of our own government.

It is a disgrace that (comparatively speaking) so young a nation as Russia—a nation so depraved and so bigoted—should ever have obtained, or for a moment preserved, her ascendancy in continental affairs. I wish to point particularly at her *late* ascendancy in both Turkey and Persia, but more especially in the latter kingdom, where, however, we have no longer an envoy who listens to her propositions, values her smiles, or joins in her measures—in

a word, who can be cajoled by flattery and craft, to forget the true interests of his own country.

With the exception of Sir Henry Willock, Sir John M'Niel* (a man of first-rate talent), and Major Hart†, there has not been a soul since the time of Sir Harford Jones

* Late of the Bombay medical service, and at present minister plenipotentiary to the court of Persia, an officer eminently distinguished for his knowledge of the history and geography of Central Asia.

† Since I quitted Persia, I have learned with unfeigned sorrow that poor Hart is no more. I crave pardon of the reader for taking this opportunity to indulge my feelings by a brief record of my lamented friend. The name of Isaac Hart will not be read, even by a common acquaintance, without awakening sentiments of the deepest regret for his loss. With good talents, he combined an invincible perseverance, a masculine understanding, and great energy of mind. These gifts were accompanied by qualities of far greater value—a generosity of spirit, a purity of principle, and a most affectionate temperament of heart, which secured him the respect of every individual (both Persian and European) of his acquaintance. He was on the eve of revisiting his native country, after an absence of twenty-two years, with the view of assisting the king of Persia, by a personal conference with his

and Sir John Malcolm (Morier was only an *attaché* to the embassy) capable of asserting and upholding our authority in Persia. As an instance of our perfect apathy of the growing influence of Russia in that quarter, I can mention that, when I was last at the court of his Royal Highness Abbas Mirza, Prince Dolgorucki, the Russian ambassador extraordinary, was travelling over the whole kingdom with the shah, while *our* envoy was rubbing his hands over a fire at Tabriz, wondering what could be the prince's views and intentions, but taking no means to ascertain them. It must be admitted, however, that our minister was in a delicate state of health; but he had *two* assistants available for any duty.

It is consolatory to know that our interests in that country are now vested in the hands of one who stands pre-eminent for his politi-

own sovereign, when unhappily his health broke down. He died at Tabriz on the eleventh day of June, 1830, and his remains, followed by the whole city, were interred in the Armenian burial ground at that place.

cal knowledge, for his caution in devising, and his vigour in effecting any measure advantageous to his own government. It may be hoped that he will yet be able to discomfit the plans laid by the deep and dark policy of the northern cabinet for the complete subserviency of the Persian court to the wishes of the czar, and the eventual subversion of the whole of that kingdom.

Of late years, we have heard a good deal about the impossibility of invading Russia with success. Lyall has paid infinite attention to the subject, and, in opposition to the views of Rostopchin, Dupin, and others, has most distinctly stated that Russia is accessible, and even her best provinces conquerable, by a cautious method of procedure, and by a much smaller army than Napoleon had when he took possession of Moscow. Count Segur holds the same opinion. In his work, he compares the relative strength of the north and the south, and then remarks :—“ The north, victorious over the south in her defensive war, as she has been, in the middle ages,

in her offensive one, now believes herself invulnerable and irresistible. Comrades, believe it not! Ye might have trampled over that soil, and those spaces, that climate, and that rough and gigantic nature, as ye had conquered its soldiers. But some errors were followed by great calamities. I have related both the one and the other. On that ocean of evils, I have erected a melancholy beacon of gloomy and blood-red light, and if my feeble hand has been insufficient for the painful task, at least I have exhibited the floating wrecks, in order that those who come after us may see the peril and avoid it."

The applause of Europe, since the year 1812, has perfectly inebriated the Russians. The officers, and the soldiers especially, believe themselves the first in existence, and imagine that they can now conquer the globe, and therefore that wherever their hordes are sent, they will march to certain victory. One of their general officers said to me at Moscow, "You certainly have the *cash*, but *we* alone can wield the sword." Such a con-

viction prevailing in an army forms a host of itself, and has led to great deeds. Was it not the long-credited infallibility of Napoleon that fought half his battles, and animated his soldiers with the idea of their own invincibility? Being master of the human mind, that "greatest of captains," spoke in an oracular style. He issued orders to his soldiers as if he had been giving instructions for a general review. His armies never hesitated; they never dreamt of defeat: they fought; they conquered—they fulfilled the commands of their leader. The Russians wish to inspire their soldiers with the same sentiments; and indeed their generals proudly insinuate that they hold the keys both of Europe and Asia. It becomes a duty to inquire whether these opinions are well founded. My own idea is, that we not only can resist the attacks of the apparently colossal power of the north, but even can retaliate her future aggressions, by taking possession of her best provinces, and reducing her to unconditional terms.

In considering the political state, the pro-

bable policy, and the vaunted military prowess of Russia, we ought to recollect, that this empire is composed of the most heterogeneous and discordant materials ; of tribes of all languages and creeds ; and that she is accessible (except in Siberia) both by sea and land. Beyond her own provinces, she is surrounded by powerful empires, most of which, through the agency of Great Britain, could be excited to act against her ; and she is encircled by territories which were once *independent kingdoms*, or were wrested from other states : and are retained by *force*, not by *consent*. Among these states may be reckoned Kazân, Astrachân, Siberia, the Kubân, the Caucasus, Georgia, Armenia, the northern provinces of Persia, the Krimea, the Baltic (especially Finland), and the Turkish provinces. With regard to the ancient kingdoms of Kazân and Astrachân, as well as that of Siberia, they are indissolubly attached to Russia, or at least their separation must be looked upon as distant. The two former are indeed now become completely *Russian*, and the geographical

position of the latter, renders its dependence upon that empire certain.

I can safely assert, from personal knowledge and observation, that mutual and bitter hatred separates Russia and Persia. His Royal Highness Abbas Mirza, the heir apparent to the Persian throne, will not soon forget the feline art with which Count Paskewitch at one time tendered his velvet paw, and at another protruded the lacerating talon. He earnestly watches an opportunity to attack the Russians, and to drive them from the Persian provinces which they obtained, chiefly through British policy, in the year 1812, as also from Georgia, and beyond the Caucasus. At a levée in Tiflis, Count Paskewitch declared, in my hearing, that he only awaited the commands of the emperor, to annihilate the kingdom of Persia, and to render her a province of the Russian empire. This speech, which is of itself sufficient to exasperate the Persians, I made known to Prince Abbas Mirza, in order that he might duly appreciate their *lip-deep* friendship.

The policy of the Georgians is dictated by necessity, because they are surrounded by three great powers, Turkey, Persia, and Russia, with none of which, from the smallness of their number, they are able to cope, and on one or other of which they must be dependant. The moment, therefore, the current turns, whether in favour of the Persians or of the Turks, the Georgians must join with them against the Russians, and assist in their expulsion from the trans-Caucasian regions. The tribes of Mount Caucasus, who are more allied in religion, in language, in customs, and manners, with the Persians, and still more so with the Turks, than with the Russians, whom they heartily detest, would unanimously rise against their present masters, by whom they are incensed to fury, in consequence of the oppressive and cruel measures pursued towards them. They would most joyfully join either Turks, Persians, or Georgians, were their own mountain freedom the promised reward.

The enmity of the Turks to the Russians

is quite proverbial, and dreadful will be their revenge if ever they have the power of inflicting it. Can they forget the late encroachments of the czar? They pant for an opportunity of advancing their frontiers again to the Don and the Krimea, whose inhabitants would readily shake off the yoke of the Russians, and render homage to their old masters. Indeed, I speak advisedly when I say, that there prevails but one sentiment from the Sea of Azof to the Caspian—one of deadly irreconcilable hostility to Russia. None is better aware than herself of the sentiment which unites as brethren every member of the Mussulman world, the chord of sympathy that vibrates through the whole—a feeling she has found it most difficult to cope with, and impossible to destroy. She knows that she may have

“—— scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it;
'Twill close and be itself, whilst her poor malice
Remains in danger of its former tooth.”

Glance at Sweden: is she contented at

Finland being under the sway of Russia, to say nothing of other provinces of which she has long been bereft? Over Sweden *we* must always have immense influence, as she is so vulnerable in many points by sea.

Now, what is the real strength of the Russian army? Admit that its numerical amount is half a million of men, a number which has an overpowering aspect—at a distance; but on a nearer inspection of this army, one half only are trained, and many of this number even scarcely know the duty of soldiers. But allowing that this number of men form a really effective army, still they are scattered over an immense empire—from the frozen ocean to the Araxes, and from the Dwina and the Dnieper to the Eastern Archipelago. There is, by the by, an army in Georgia of seventy thousand men. In so far, therefore, as the Russian army depends upon mere *physical* force, it may be said to be very great if it could be concentrated; but this is *impossible*. Inasmuch as its force depends upon its discipline, it may be

reckoned considerable, because the Emperor "of all the Russias" has taken immense pains to improve himself in military tactics. Again, the character of the Russian soldier is fully established—brave, hardy, obedient, and devoted—qualities of the greatest importance in a military point of view. In regard to its *moral* force it is despicably *small*, as the Russians know absolutely nothing of the *practice*, however much they may speak of the *precepts*, of morality. But then, again, what is lost in moral force, may be said to be gained in "divine" force, or that force which is generated by the soldier's confidence in the justice of his cause, and the glorious reward which awaits him should he fall; for he is animated by the idea, that if he dies in the service of his country, his soul will gain a blessed immortality.

If ever the European powers combine against Russia, they would of course secure the co-operation of Sweden, Turkey, and Persia. Suppose that France and Austria were roused to form a league against the

autocrat, and that Great Britain joins them, and engages to furnish a sum of money to assist in the payment of the army, while she equips a fleet for an attack in the Baltic, and another to enter the Black Sea. In this case, the coalition would no doubt engage Persia to carry on a harassing warfare on a promise to secure to her a restitution of all her stolen provinces; it would excite the Turks to make war in Moldavia and Wallachia, and to push forward to Bessarabia; Sweden would muster an army, and make a diversion in Finland; the grand army of coalition would then advance towards the south-east, and pass forward in a line nearly parallel with the western boundary of Bessarabia and Kief. Thus the forces of Russia would be divided: so many would be left in Georgia, so many in Finland, and a large army to oppose the Turks. Their chief forces, however, would be employed against the grand army of coalition; and, in proportion as they advanced, Russia would be obliged to draw her forces from Wallachia and

Bessarabia, and thus, by weakening the power of resistance, favour the advance of the Turks. Suppose the Turks have succeeded in dividing the Russians from Bessarabia, and that, assisted by our fleet, they wish to retake the Krimea; the peninsula being secured, the lines of Perekap, which command its entrance by land, would be fortified and guarded, while a sufficient force was also placed at Inbit to prevent a landing in a way similar to what took place by command of General Lascey in the reign of the Empress Anne. Odessa, Nicolaëf, Kherson, and even Taganrog, might be taken, and the Russian fleet destroyed. Thus, in the South, the Black Sea, the Sea of Azof, with the Krimea, and the frontiers of Bessarabia, as well as the Dnieper, Kief, Kharkof, and Odessa, would form the first line of military operations, and the conclusion of the first season of the campaign. A line of defence being thus formed, which would prevent the Russians from turning the flanks either of the Turks or of the grand army, the whole

might go into winter quarters, secure of abundance of provisions. The combined army would be well supplied by the Turkish provinces, the Turks also by their own country, and the Krimea by the Turks through the British fleet. Indeed, the Krimea would form a splendid magazine for military stores, whence supplies could be obtained at the commencement of the second season of the campaign.

After the dissolution of the frozen snows, the grand army, and the Circassians, Turks, and Krimea Tartars, might advance towards Mohilef, Voronitz, Kursk, Orel, Tula, and Moscow; as well as to Ekaterinoslaf, Simbirsk, and Tambof: thus allowing no enemy to get into their rear, but driving all the forces of Russia before them.

Let us now return to the north. If the Swedes have alarmed the Russians, and have demanded the presence of an army to keep them in check, a powerful diversion would thus be produced in favour of the grand invading army. With the opening

the second campaign, all necessary preparations having been made, a simultaneous attack might be made by sea on Riga, Revel, and St. Petersburg. The British fleet could pass the batteries of Cronstadt with a fair wind, or by the assistance of steamers. That this is practicable, I know from an officer of high rank in her Majesty's navy, whom I accompanied in his examination of the place; and were it of any consequence, the batteries of Cronslot, Cronstadt, and all the rest which were erected in the Gulf of Finland at the time the emperor Paul expected a British squadron off his capital, could be destroyed, and even the island on which Cronstadt stands, be taken.

The south of Russia thus being in possession of her enemies—the British fleet riding in the Black sea—St. Petersburg blockaded, and threatened with a bombardment by steam vessels—commerce at a stand—the ports in the Baltic, Black, White, and Azof Seas all blocked up—the whole empire from north to south, suffering under innumerable privations

—is it not reasonable to presume that Russia would be glad to conclude a treaty of peace on terms very advantageous to her opponents, or that her slavish hordes would fly to Siberia to await future events? If she delayed coming to terms, the southern provinces would yield abundance of food; time would be granted for gaining over the inhabitants by attention to their manners and customs, by humouring their prejudices, by respecting their religious tenets, and by adopting a kind and conciliatory manner of treatment—means which are sometimes infinitely more important than military armaments.

Whatever be the powers which might wish to invade Russia, or whatever the politics which might dictate such a measure, it would be of the utmost consequence to convince the army, not only of the possibility, but of the facility of the invasion. To prevent all misgivings on their part, by a remembrance of the fate of Napoleon's magnificent army, they should be made acquainted with the *causes* of his failure, and be convinced that great

circumspection would be adopted by the officers.

Although I wish that peace may be long maintained between Russia and Great Britain, I really do think it is of some importance that neither Russia, nor any other state, should be imbued with false notions as to the power of the autocrat, and the inaccessibility of his territories.

CHAPTER IX.

Prince Abbas Mirza—His Hall of Audience—His Appearance—Interview with him—Trade with Persia—Plains and Defiles—Walking Dress—Persian Women—Persian Ladies—Temperature at Tabriz—Departure from Tabriz—Mountain Range—Dekhargaum—A Mountain Glen—Tabriz Marble—Ouroomia and Asphaltes—Profound Solitude—Sterile Scene—Jaffer Kuli Khan—Persian Despotism—District of Benaub—Persian Dish—A Bon-Vivant—Italian Wine Merchant—Ploughs—Rafts—Crossing the Jakantoo—The River Jakantoo—Murder of Brown—Persian Mendacity—The Persian Character—Meandaub—Storks.

HIS Royal Highness Abbas Mirza has been formally proclaimed heir apparent to the Crown. This has been acknowledged by the two greatest powers in Europe, but it is a matter of much doubt and uncertainty whether he will outlive his father. The reigning family will never be firmly established upon the throne, because the Kujurs, or royal tribe of Persia, are detested by all classes of people; and a day may arrive—

an attempt will be made to exterminate
altogether.

uring my stay at Tabriz, I was pre-
ed to Abbas Mirza, by Doctor Cormick.
were ushered into his royal highness's
"wan Khaneh," or hall of reception and
ence, which on entering we found so dark
the bright sun to which our eyes had
exposed on the way, that we could not
ome minutes distinguish a single object
in. The room was long and narrow,
re all chambers in Persian houses, and
floor was beautifully carpeted and em-
lered. Upon a splendidly embossed felt,
ne corner of the room, farthest from the
ance, and in the centre of the felt, which,
no cushions, Prince Abbas Mirza was
ed. The style of his dress assimilated
that worn by all Persians of the highest
r. He had a dark coloured pelisse,
l and skirted with sable. From his waist
ected through the sable, the handle of his
ger, mounted with brilliants, and on his
t side lay a Damascus sabre, the scabbard

of which was of gold, enamelled and ornamented with the "feerouza*" (turquoise) and other valuable stones.

In appearance Abbas Mirza was about forty-eight years of age. His countenance was handsome, though his features were not well shaped. His long black-dyed beard was truly splendid; it formed so great a contrast with the paleness of his face, that I could scarcely persuade myself paint had not been used. His hands were delicate, and on one finger he wore a splendid diamond, which he often exposed to our view by bringing the hand in contact with his beard. His affability was extreme, his manner highly polished, and his expressions of civility wore that tinge of hyperbole for which the Persians are so remarkable. Sir Robert Kerr Porter's portrait of him conveyed no idea of the expres-

* Feerouza, or pirooza, signifies in the Persian *prosperous*. Orientals consider that this gem possesses a talismanic virtue, and many wealthy Turks have declared to me that they would give a higher price for one than for a diamond. *They* look to the size of the stone—we to its colour.

sion of his countenance; but Doctor Cormick told me he was sadly altered of late years, in consequence of his debauched habits. His conversation turned principally upon the emigration of Englishmen to New South Wales, and of its climate, productions, &c. He was highly amused at our description of the kangaroo, but nothing could persuade him they were fit for *Kabobs*. However, said he, "I would not hesitate in tasting them, provided *you* set me the example, for then I should see by your face if they were good." Whatever I said, Cormick turned into an extravagant compliment to the prince royal, and appealed to me if it was not what I intended to express. Of course I could not dissent. After remaining in the audience room for about half an hour, we bowed, and retired under the escort of the *Kaimakaum*, or prime minister, who accompanied us to the outer court of the palace, where we remounted our horses, and returned home.

During this interview, I was much surprised at having *tea* handed round to us in

place of that universal beverage of the East, coffee. All who can afford it are now in the habit of drinking *tea* throughout the day: it is even usual, in Azerbijaun, for the people to greet their visitors with a cup of tea. The use of this beverage is becoming very general throughout the northern parts of Persia, although as yet it bears a high price. The trade is entirely monopolized by the Russians. If a few British merchants were established at Tabriz, they might carry on a very successful business; especially now that the Black Sea has been opened to all European vessels, and the old channel of communication with Persia resumed. Merchandize may now at a very trifling expense be conveyed from London to Trebizond, and thence to Persia, in the course of a few weeks. During the last year of my residence in this country no less than five thousand bales of English goods passed through Erzeroum on their passage to Tabriz, and all on account of *native* merchants.

Not long ago, the governor of Bombay—

Major-General Sir John Malcolm, sent Abbas Mirza a very handsome Long Acre built stanhope, which he sported about the suburbs of the city, and issued a proclamation ordering all his ministers to provide themselves with similar equipages *forthwith*, quite forgetting there were neither carriage builders nor harness makers in the empire.

The nature of the country is decidedly favorable for wheel carriages, you might drive Hansom's patent safety cab, or Laurie's pilentum, with nearly as great facility as upon a turnpike road. Little trouble and expense would make good roads, except through the narrow defiles leading from one plain to another, where the ruggedness of the mountain passes presents serious difficulties. It was a pity that his royal highness, on a late hunting *pic-nic*, did not follow the prudent example of Darius, who after the battle of Issus kept to his car, so long as he was on the plains, but alighted from it, and took horse, when he reached the mountains. The prince royal took his stanhope into Karabaugh,

which is his "hunting place," and most foolishly attempted to dash through a defile, when his horse shyed, overturned and smashed the fine stanhope to pieces, and nearly broke his highness's neck to boot. Since this accident, he has forgotten to have his orders enforced either in building stanhopes or constructing roads. Some of the *attachés* to our embassy have produced *droskies* from Tiflis, which are drawn through the narrow streets of the town by their grooms, but on reaching the outer gates they are able to drive a pair over the surrounding plain.

I was often much amused in my rambles round Tabriz, at meeting the Mahometan ladies promenading the streets enveloped in their white muslin *chaders*. This covering resembles a winding sheet, and of course conceals the whole figure, reaching from head to foot. The veil hides the entire face except the eyes, before which there is a sort of netting, fastened to a band tied round the head. The whole attire is ex-

tremely inconvenient as a walking dress, and considered as such by the *Mussul-women*, especially by those who are pretty. When no native was within hail (as the sailors would say) they invariably (if good-looking) tossed off their veils, and in a sprightly manner expressed a desire to become better acquainted. The same forward air was also displayed by the women, who, although under lock and key, often appeared at the little latticed windows overlooking the road; these manifested by their *coquetterie*, and a peculiar laugh of the eye, their expression of delight at the attention they excited. Their eyelids were blackened with the *kahel*, which is a collyrium composed of the smoke-black produced by burning the shells of almonds; and, in some cases, among the wealthier orders, by pounding down and calcining jewels. Their faces, also, appeared as if they had used *rouge*, and their gaily adorned head-dresses reminded me of the same custom having existed in the earliest times: for in the second book of

Kings, we read of Jezebel *painting* her face, and looking out at the window*. They have also a busy trifling with their veils†, under the pretence of adjusting their châders, or their ringlets, which have *perhaps* been tickling their pretty faces. During the time they are thus engaged, they take especial care to make the best use of their large gazelle-like eyes.

Their musky locks have each a spell,
Each hair itself ensnares the heart;
Their moles are irresistible,
And rapture to the soul impart.

Hafiz, in one of his beautiful odes, exclaims, "I would give for the mole on her cheek the cities of Samarkand and Bokhara."

In speaking of the women, I shall briefly remark that they have intrigue to their fingers' ends, *à la Française*. The women of

* "And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked out at the window." (2 Kings xi. 30; Ezekiel xxiii. 40.)

† The use of the veil is of the remotest antiquity. Vide Genesis xxiv. 65; also Isaiah iii. 23.

the higher orders are extremely profligate, and when engaged in an assignation, quit their home, wrapt in the impenetrable *châder* of one of their female slaves. They frequently run great risks, and many a paramour has lost his life on account of these women.

I am not inclined to believe that the Mahometan women are so often punished with death, when found guilty of infidelity, as most travellers would make us suppose: indeed I know some instances where the wife of a Moslem has escaped, and the lover been made away with. In Tabriz, a person carried on an intimacy with a Persian lady for several months. When the husband discovered it, he divorced his wife, and secret-
ing himself in the bathing room of the lover's house, a little before daylight, awaited his approach, when he stabbed him to the heart. Another instance of a somewhat similar nature happened at the same place, in which a Christian was the paramour. The injured husband gained access to a curtained recess near the harem, which, he imagined, would

be the place of assignation, and after remaining there for several hours, heard footsteps approaching. On feeling the curtain pulled open from without, he rushed forward, and murdered—*not* the guilty man, but an unfortunate old woman of three score years and ten!

There is no country on earth where the women have greater opportunities for immoral conduct than Persia. Major Hart assured me that when the Russians were in possession of Tabriz, many of the nobles fled to Khoi, Aroomia, and other adjacent towns, leaving their wives and slaves in possession of their houses and of their liberty. These women actually flocked at nightfall to the citadel where many of the Russian officers were quartered, and in such numbers, that the sentries were compelled to repel them with the butt-end of their firelocks, or they would have been completely overpowered. On admission to the officers, it was at first supposed that fear had driven them there for protection; but it soon appeared

that other motives induced their flight. I could add many other facts, but the foregoing will, I think, be sufficient to shew that the Persians have some cause for secluding their women. Indeed, the feelings which they entertain towards the sex is admirably expressed in one of their own words, which we should translate into "frailty," or "weakness." Shakspeare's celebrated words in Hamlet,

"Frailty, thy name is woman,"

is highly characteristic of the Persian ladies.

During the time we stayed at Tabriz the weather was exceedingly cold, with strong south-easterly winds, and occasional falls of snow. The mean of Fahrenheit's thermometer was 22° in the morning, and 25° in the evening; the extremes 4° in the morning, and 9° at night.

After a five weeks sojourn in Tabriz, we engaged with a Katurjee Bashee* to supply us with eight mules for our luggage and Kaja-

* Katurjee Bashee: chief of a caravan of mules.

vahs, purchased three horses for our own riding, and bade adieu to our hospitable friend on the 31st of March, at the hour when the once worshipped god of the Persians was lifting his glorious forehead over the height of the city walls, and when from every mosque the Mussulman's loud voice was heard calling on all true believers to rise to their orisons—"God is most great; there is no God but God; Mahomet is his prophet. Come to prayer; prayer is better than sleep. Come to the asylum of salvation. God is most great; there is no deity but God."

Our Persian Mehmaundar, Seyyud Abdallah, who was ordered to attend us by his Royal Highness Prince Abbas Mirza, advised that our first stage should be made to the village of Khosrou-Shah, seated in the fertile and pretty valley of Uz-koh, about eighteen miles from Tabriz. The road led past the hamlet of Serdary, which rises from an eminence, and occupies the base of a hill, over whose summit the *débris* of a fortress are strewed. A most extensive plain

bounded the view on our right, over which a tantalizing *mirage* played, and excited our imaginations to such a degree, that we fancied ourselves traversing the shores of a Pacific Ocean, on which vessels lay becalmed*. This optical deception has been noticed from the remotest times, and modern writers have described it *usque ad nauseam*.

In winding round the hills on our left, we observed innumerable hamlets embosomed amongst trees, and the snow-capped mountain-range of the Sahand rose beyond the valley to the height of ten thousand feet above the level of the sea, producing a most picturesque effect. The general appearance of this district, the extent of its cultivation, its gardens and its plantations, attest that the great mass of the peasantry in Persia are not so much oppressed as all travellers have asserted. Indeed,

* Quintus Curtius, in describing Alexander's march through the Sogdian desert, says, that "the plains wore the appearance of a vast and deep sea." (Quin. Cur. lib. vii. cap. 5.) This is a most perfect description of the *mirage* as seen in all eastern countries.

the whole of the country on this side the Araxes has exhibited a very strong contrast to that on the other, which alone proves that the Persian chiefs are greatly interested in the produce of the soil. In fact, if a peasant loses his crop here, the landholder assists him; but should such a misfortune occur in Karabaugh, he would be irretrievably ruined, because a beggarly Russian commandant has neither the means nor the inclination to afford him the slightest relief.

From Uz-koh to Dekhargaum, a distance of full twenty miles, the country was a level plain, over which we saw flocks of the bustard, and several large foxes; but owing to their extreme shyness, we could not approach sufficiently near to obtain a shot at them. Shortly before we caught the first view of the town, we observed Lake Ouroomia spreading its unruffled waters through a succession of rugged promontories, of which a towering snow-peaked range, which fringed the western horizon, formed the most magnificent feature. Dekhargaum is encircled by a mud

wall, and surrounded with extensive gardens and orchards. This town was the headquarters of the Russian cavalry at the time Field-Marshal Count Paskewitch was carousing at Tabriz. The whole district is wonderfully productive, and a beautiful foraging country. It once supported the king of Persia's army, which consisted of eighty thousand men, for a period of three months; and when Paskewitch evacuated Azerbaijan, grain was even cheaper than it had been known for several years.

On the 2nd of April, we passed on to Khaneah over a tract of mountain glen of about sixteen miles, destitute of both habitation and culture. Several rills oozed from out the rocks, and pursued their tranquil courses towards the lake; and many pretty little birds darted across our road, and appeared to eye us from a distance, as they balanced themselves on the point of the long upturned reeds. We distinctly heard the hawk's cry as he skimmed along the rugged cliffs; and the yellow-winged earth-bee

boomed around us, and with a bold hum spun away to the marshy shore of Shahi.

The hamlet of Khaneah lies upon the margin of the lake, and were it a little more elevated, would command a grand view of it. The face of the Koordistaun mountains, which gird its western shore, wore all the appearance of a volcanic region. A little before we entered the hamlet, we saw several chalybeate springs bubbling from the earth, and near these were some very curious petrifications. The springs form about a dozen ponds, which stagnate, and petrify by a slow and regular process, and produce that stone which in Persia is called "Tabriz marble." The water had the appearance of being frozen, and we were told that when the stagnation is completed, a man could walk over it. The stone is as transparent as the finest porcelain—very brittle, and often streaked in veins of various colours. Its usual appearance is that of alabaster, and it is capable of receiving as fine a polish. There were no fissures in the slabs that we saw. Rushes

grew around most luxuriantly, and the neighbourhood was marshy and saline. This very remarkable curiosity bears north 20° west, and is situated about two miles from the salt water lake of Ouroomia.

Few objects are more calculated to arrest the attention of the traveller than this lake, which is considered to be the Spauto and Marcianus of Strabo and Ptolemy, and is called Deriah Sháhé, the Sea of Shahi, or Lake of Ouroomia, from a town situated near its western bank. There is a remarkable resemblance between the lakes Ouroomia and Asphaltes. Although fourteen rivers flow into the former, there is no apparent increase in its height; on the contrary, signs of diminution are very apparent, so that the evaporation is greater than the supply. No living creature is found in either lake; for as soon as the rivers carry down any of their fish, they instantly die and become putrid. Their waters are much the same—intensely cold, and containing one third more salt than the ocean. The extreme length of the two lakes

is also the same—seventy miles; but Ooroomia is thrice the breadth of Asphaltes, being thirty miles, and containing about eight fathoms water in its deepest part. It includes eight or ten well wooded islands, and as many rocks rising out of the water, to the height of at least forty feet. These islands supply Tabriz and other large cities with fuel, which in Persia is both scarce and dear.

Just as the sun was on the eve of setting, I proceeded on foot and alone to the shore of the lake, over ground which appeared to have been recently abandoned by the water, if we may judge from the swampy and saline nature of the soil. The western shore appeared high and bold, the northern low and marshy, and terminating with a large ribbon of sand on a level with the lake itself. An awful silence hung around; the sound of its waters slowly rippling before the wind, were even more appalling than the desolation of its shores. In this solitude I felt something approaching to pleasure from the sight of a hawk which passed over its unnavigated

ers. The simple incident arrested the rise of those feelings which Divine indignation forces upon a traveller who visits the Dead Sea—though the assertion that no birds fly over that sea, on account of the pestiferous vapour they inhale from its surface, received a marked contradiction by our best travellers. I have already remarked that no fish exist in Lake Ouroumia. I made particular inquiries at the hamlet on this subject, and the villagers assured me they had never seen any, nor could I find on the shore a single shell, or even a solitary tree or weed. The whole, the vast wilderness, and dread-sterility of the scene, was amply sufficient to impress me with feelings of awe and admiration. I remained about half an hour on shore, and filled a bottle with the water, which the muleteers accidentally broke. The shades of evening closed over me on returning to the village, which I was not long in reaching, as a rencontre with any of the wandering tribes, who are ever on the watch, would have been rather *inconvenient*.

Previously to leaving the flat waste which surrounds the lake, we gazed upon the marshes which render Sháhé a peninsula. Far off to the west, we saw the cloud-dia-dem that crowns the chain of mountains which divided the old Assyrian and Median empires, and other mountain ranges, all accustomed to "parley with the setting sun." Shortly afterwards we were hidden from the lake altogether, but obtained a more expanded view as we descended from the mountains towards Ajub-shir. From this place we saw all the islands of the gleaming lake lying in a cluster, which gave it the appearance of a little glimmering archipelago. Ajub-shir is a small village, standing beside one of the fourteen rivers that flow into Ouroomia; it is the property of Jaffer Kuli Khan, the opulent chief of Maraughá. This man is one of the greatest landed proprietors in Persia, and the bitterest scourge of Azerbaiján. The peasantry however, appeared industrious, and all of them infinitely superior in intelligence to the Ryots of British India. Jaffer Kuli Khan

lives like an independent prince. His rule is absolute; he is invested with the power of life and death, which he frequently exercises without any reference to His Royal Highness Abbas Mirza. If any complaint of oppression is made at the court of Tabriz, the heir apparent levies a certain sum upon the oppressor, and then consigns the oppressed to his vengeance! It is utterly impossible for Englishmen who have never visited Asiatic countries, to conceive the life of misery which the poorer classes endure under the wild caprice, and perpetual irritation of Persian despots in general, and of this tyrant in particular. The peasant's dearest ties are subjected to brutal passion; and he is under a constant fear that the fruits of a life of industry will be sacrificed to the avarice of some insolent slave raised into sudden authority by his superior villany, and sent forth to live by plunder and rapine. God forbid that the day of oppression may not have an end—that man, however defiled with the dust of slavery, may not wring the scourge

from the hand of the tyrant, and clear away the stain!

We passed the greater part of the day at Ajubshir, as all the beauty tended towards the west; each hour deepening the prospect into mellower splendour. To keep the eye from reposing on the lake, was quite impossible; its glassy waters soothed one's soul, without holding it away from the mounts and cliffs, which, forming of themselves a most perfect picture, were all united with the mountainous regions of western Koordistau.

Towards sunset we proceeded and met the Persian shepherds driving their numerous flocks and herds to the village. The husbandmen, also, were returning to their homes from the toils of the day. We soon descried the rich town and fertile district of Benaub, which is distinguished by its extensive gardens and orchards. From this spot is seen, not only the great expanse of the lake but the full extremity of the plain to the northward. The hamlets here were large, and "navelled" in lovely groves of fruit-

trees. Their inhabitants, though poor, appeared to possess an abundance of the necessities of life, and were far better lodged and appavelled than the lower orders of Southern Russia and Georgia.

We passed the night within the cottage of a tobacconist, and refreshed ourselves by smoking a choice collection of kaleoons and chibouques. We were then served with two boiled fowls, floating on a small ocean of the milk of goats, and thickened with the whitest rice.

“Here’s a dish fit for the cousin of the sun,” exclaimed our host, rubbing his hands and smacking his lips with expectation.

“Bismillah*,” he added, as a signal for us to commence operations. In a moment his fingers were in the dish, and in another the tenderly boiled fowls were dissected limb by limb.

“By the mouth of Mahommed, this dish is a savoury meal!” To this we all agreed,

* This word signifies, “In the name of the most merciful God.”

for the pilau was excellent; and, to do the Persians justice, it must be admitted, that they excel in this dish; in truth, Persia is the only country where it is cooked to perfection.

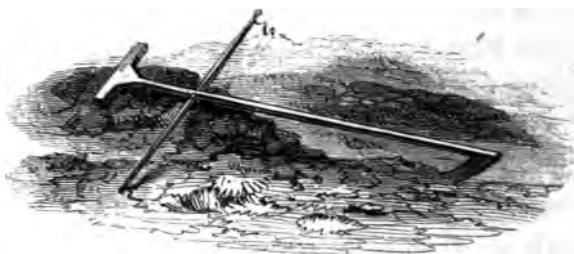
Whilst we were discussing the fowls, I saw several young girls looking and giggling at us through the crevices of the harem door; and, if I might judge from a few hasty glimpses, I should say, that our host had a good taste in women. In presenting me with a kaleoon, I was surprised to see him produce a bottle of Tabriz wine from a curtained recess, which appeared well filled with jars. After a copious libation, he got quite fuddled; so I knocked the ashes from off the top of his chibouque, which he continued to inhale with as much apparent satisfaction as if I had supplied it afresh. He then stretched himself out on the carpet, and fell sound asleep.

Benaub is encircled by vineyards to a considerable extent, which yield a grape celebrated throughout Persia for the good wine

it produces. Indeed, the wine made by an Italian at Tabriz, who was by trade a carpenter, equalled in richness of flavour any I ever tasted at the first tables in London. The king of Persia, by a royal ordonnance, invested this Italian with the order of the Lion and Sun; in return, perhaps, for the good wine he sent to the royal cellar: or, he may have been the Shah's wine-merchant, for any thing I know to the contrary. This, however, is well known, namely, that his majesty's harem consumed more of Hodgson's pale ale than any regimental mess in India.

No one was stirring, although it was early day when we departed for Meandaub, distant about twenty-five miles, over a flat and wearisome country. We passed many hamlets, which terminated on every side in extensive patches of green dale, enriched with vineyards, and dotted with frequent flocks. As we journeyed on, we saw the cultivators on the ground: their agricultural implements appeared of the simplest construction. The plough, for instance, was formed of two

wooden beams, one of which was placed athwart-wise, to yoke the buffaloes or oxen together; and, at the extreme end, a shapeless wedge of iron was affixed, to turn up the earth, thus:—



This ploughshare does not enter the ground deeper than about six or eight inches.

About noon we reached the banks of the river Jakantoo, and found a rude kind of raft, constructed of beams placed across several inflated sheep-skins, which was to convey us to the opposite shore. This raft closely resembled the *kellek* of Assyria, a description of which is given in my work on Chaldæa, published in 1829. The stream appeared about ninety

feet wide: its waters were very rapid, and we had great difficulty in getting the baggage mules on board the raft. On consigning ourselves to the stream, the boatmen rowed with sufficient ease, until they got into mid-channel, when we were swept along by the stream for a considerable distance, and with the greatest velocity. During our passage the boatmen shouted out, "God preserve us!" and one of the most active brought us dexterously to a shoal near the southern bank, when he leaped into the river, and contrived to stay our course so as to admit of our casting the horses and mules adrift, which lightened the boat and enabled us to land on the opposite bank. They then re-crossed the stream, after towing the raft to a certain height up the river, and far beyond the point of embarkation on the opposite shore. Two miles below this ferry, the stream is generally fordable, as the waters have become shallow by expansion; and I was told that, in the depth of winter it freezes so hard as to admit large kafilahs

to cross its surface, though, from the apparent rapidity of its course, I should be inclined to doubt this information.

The Jakantoo flows into the lake of Ooroomea, and is a branch of the Kizil-Oozan, which is supposed by the illustrious Rennell to have been the *Gozan* of Scripture. “In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. (See 2 Kings xvii. 6.) Its present appellative is descriptive of the yellow hue of its waters. Its course is tortuous and rapid; during autumn it is very shallow, but from April until August, the dissolution of the snows renders it impassable except by ferries. Its waters are filled with snakes, which the natives, however, declare are not venomous. Being augmented by several streams from the neighbourhood of the small hamlet of Bannah, seated in the north-eastern branch of the Koordistaun mountains, it sweeps along through an Alpine country, till

it enters Ghilan; where, rushing onwards through a beautifully wooded region, it discharges itself into the Caspian Sea, a little to the eastward of Resht.

The banks of this river became, a few years ago, the scene of the mysterious murder of the celebrated African traveller, Brown; and, although his Britannic Majesty's ambassador extraordinary, Sir Gore Ouseley, was in the country, and, in fact, very close to the neighbourhood of this sad catastrophe at the time it occurred, yet, strange to say, no resolute and determined measures were taken for the apprehension of the perpetrators. I have little doubt that his majesty of Persia was accessory to this murder: indeed, it was the current opinion in the country at the time; but, unfortunately, our character was not then in very high estimation at the court of the "king of kings." Poor Brown's ultimate object was to investigate that magnificent country, Khorasaun. The present shah appears determined that no traveller shall have his majesty's *real*

protection, if his journey lies in that direction. Although Mr. Fraser visited some parts of it, which he has ably described, yet his sufferings were great, his obstacles almost insurmountable, and his treatment infamous. For this our travellers have to thank their kind friend and protector, Fattah-Ali-Shah. His majesty dislikes to hear of any British travellers penetrating into Khorasaun; he, therefore, seldom fails to use his best endeavours to make them adorn a tale, instead of telling one.

His majesty is the most accomplished liar in the kingdom: for, be it known that, in Persia, "lying and slandering" are considered fashionable accomplishments. Whoever doubts the authenticity of this assertion, had better close my pages and consult those travellers of the last as well as of the present century; he can then judge for himself. For gain, a Persian will commit the blackest crime—falsehood flows spontaneously from his lips, even when no apparent motive exists. In speaking of the

Persian character, it will be found to be the natural result of the circumstances in which the people are placed. A Persian will defend himself by cunning rather than by courage, and is so dependant on the aid of others, that he knows not when to trust to himself. He calls on "Khudah" when he should exert himself, and sheds tears when he should shew spirit. He makes splendid professions when he knows his sincerity will not be tested; and is at once mean and ostentatious. In a word, his character is made up of selfishness, avarice, treachery, deceit, and cruelty. Lord Heytesbury asked me, at St. Petersburg, what was the *real* character of the Persians? I replied, "My lord, they surround a person, like the flies, with the sunshine, to disappear when he gets under a cloud. Their buzzing is quite nauseous. God help the man who does not know how to appreciate the value of their *lip-deep* friendship!"

After arranging our baggage, reloading our mules, and paying the boatmen a

tomaun, which is equivalent to twelve shillings and fourpence, we directed our course due south, which soon brought us to the gates of the town of Meandaub, or Meadow. On entering this place, we had to pass through such narrow lanes, that our laden cattle found the greatest difficulty in effecting a passage at all. Our baggage was frequently thrown down by the mules coming forcibly in contact with the dilapidated mud walls, between which we wound. On these occasions, our servant, Meerza Hoossain, used to apply the "chabook" (whip) to the poor katurjees backs most unmercifully, and made up for the utter indifference displayed by our mehmaundar Seyyud Abdallah, who was the most useless and cowardly scoundrel I ever met, being utterly indifferent either to our comfort, or our safety.

Although night was fast approaching, no lights were seen in any quarter except in the miserable bazaar, which was, in fact, the only thoroughfare that deserved the name of a street. We took possession of a large

house, the property of the wealthy and powerful Persian, Jaffer Kuli Khan, of Maraughah. Its lofty walls formed an oblong square, or parallelogram, and exteriorly it was highly ornamented in the arabesque manner. Its rooms were capacious and convenient; its interior walls stuccoed and painted; and, what is very uncommon in Persia, its height was nearly one hundred feet. This edifice was fast falling to decay, and, upon its summit, great numbers of storks had built their circular nests of sticks and reed. These make a loud clattering noise with their long bills, which sounds exactly like a watchman's rattle. Although these birds are considered unclean, and forbidden to the Jews—"these are they which ye shall have in abomination among the fowls; they shall not be eaten, they are an abomination: the stork and heron after her kind," (Leviticus xi. 13, 19)—yet they are marked by qualities of an amiable nature, and so attached to the tops of houses, that they appear to defy all

attempts at dislodging them. Indeed, the Persians say that they bring good luck to the dwelling on which they alight, and, in Egypt, they are held as objects of veneration. Bruce remarks, in his "Travels," that it was a great breach of order to kill any of these birds in Cairo; and Ali Bey mentions a most extraordinary establishment at Fez, for the treatment of lunatics. "It is very strange," says he, "that great part of the funds have been bequeathed, by the wills of various charitable testators, for the express purpose of nursing sick cranes and storks, and burying them when dead*." I never heard an instance of any one daring to shoot them. During the winter season, they migrate to the level country bordering the great rivers of Mesopotamia, and return again to their old habitations in early spring—"yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times." (Jeremiah viii. 7).

* See the Travels of Ali Bey.

CHAPTER X.

Meandaub — Saladin — Mountain-range — Mineral Treasures—
 Mines—Forests—Underwoods—The Camel's Thorn—Niebuhr's
 Remarks—Population of Koordistaun—The Koords—Murder
 of Schultz—Koordish Ferocity—The Koordish Frontier.

THE Persian town of Meandow, or Meandaub, is situated on the frontiers of one of the most beautiful and celebrated regions in the east — Koordistaun, the ancient Karducia*, which, in olden times, was rendered so renowned by the pen and the sword of Xenophon; and, in more modern days, has

* Καρδούχους. This people came afterwards to be better known under the name of Parthians. Strabo says, *Πρὸς τῇ Τύρῃ, τὰ τῶν Παρθύνων χωρία οὗτοι οἱ παλαιοὶ Καρδούχους ἔλεγον*. It was the posterity of this very people who, under the conduct of their king Arsaces, freed their country from the dominion of the Seleucides, and afterwards became a terror even to the Romans, who were so to the rest of mankind.

possessed the greatest historical interest from being the country of Saladin (Salah-ul-deen, "the righteousness of religion,") whose achievements with our own gallant Richard Cœur de Lion are fresh in the remembrance of every reader of the wars in Palestine. A Koordish writer states, that Saladin obtained great wealth on the death of his relative Azad Ishmail. Amongst other jewels, was a staff of emeralds; and his desire of attaining wisdom was gratified by his succeeding to a library of a hundred thousand volumes. This writer coincides with D'Herbelot, except in the account which the latter gives of the contracted marriage between the brother of Salah-ul-deen and the sister of the king of England.

According to an Oriental manuscript, Saladin was the son of the police magistrate of the town of Tekhrit. "*Incidit nativitas ejus, prout memoriæ proditum accepimus a fide dignissimis, qui in eam indagarunt secundam artem astrologicam; ad thema natalitium ei inædificandum, aliquo mensium*

anni quingentesimi trigesimi secundi; in arce *Tecrita*, cujus præfecturam obtinebat pater ejus *Jobus Ibn Schjads*i, vir nobilis, magnanimus, prudens, indole ac moribus pulcherrimis præditus, qui natus fuerat Dawini*." Herbelot de Moloinville in his *Oriental Dictionary*, calls him "Salaheddin Iosef Ben Aioub Schadi," and says, "C'est le nom du grand Saladin, qui étoit Curde d'origine, et qui vint, avec son frère Schirgoueh, au service de Noureddin Zenghi, Prince d'Helep, de Damas, et de plusieurs autres pays et villes de la Syrie et de la Mesopotamie, Prince, que les Historiens des Guerres que les Francs ont faites dans la Terre-Sainte, appellent Norandin†."

Koordistaun presents an immense succession of hill and valley, dells and plains of exhaustless fertility, and mountains towering to nearly the height of Mont Blanc. The top of the great range of

* *Vita et Res gestæ Sultani Almalichi Alnasiri Saladini*. Lugduni Batavorum, edit. 1732.

† D'Herbelot *Bibliothèque Orientale*, p. 742, 4to.

Zagros rises upwards of fourteen thousand feet above the level of the ocean. Between the Araxes and the base of this range, high masses of mountain support table land of greater or lesser breadth, which sometimes widens into broad plains. Where these plains do not occur, the mountains attain their greatest elevation. The Euphrates and Tigris sweep round, and run nearly parallel to these ranges. The great Karducian chain is cut through by the Tigris, near to the site of the ancient Nineveh, whence both streams enclose the boundless plains of Mesopotamia, or Ull Jezirah*, as

* Gezirah, isle, et presqu'isle en général, mais, en particulier, Al Gezirah se prend pour la Mesopotamie, province renfermée entre les deux fleuves de Tigre et l'Euphrate, que les Arabes divisent en quatre parties, ausquelles ils donnent le nom de Diar, ou Quartiers. (D'Herbelot, fol. Paris ed. p. 384.)

The tract of country called Jezirah is that which lies between the rivers Dejeleh (Tigris) and Forat (Euphrates). On the eastern side of the river Dejeleh, and on the western side of the Forat, are various towns and cities, which are reckoned, on account of their vicinity, as belonging to Jezirah, although in fact, not so. (Vide

the Arabs of the country call it, and uniting at Koorna*, or Apamea, fall into the Persian Gulf.

The lofty chains which thus traverse and enclose the country of the Karducii, contain many productions of the mineral kingdom. Their treasures still lie buried and unexplored, because this territory is in the hands of barbarians who are utterly ignorant of the hidden wealth with which nature has endowed it. Many hills contain inexhaustible mines of salt, especially between Van and Ararat. A small lake also exists here, which, during the autumn, is covered with a thick crust of salt. Saltpetre, sulphur, and arsenic, are likewise to be met with, and the soil is deeply impregnated with alum.

the Oriental Geography of Ebn Haukal, an Arabian traveller of the tenth century. 4to. p. 69.)

* Seleucus Nicator founded this town in honour of his first wife Apama, the daughter of Artabazus the Persian. He was a great protector of the Jews, and settled many of them in this and other towns upon the Euphrates. (Vide Prideaux *passim*, and the Universal History, *Ancient*, Vol. ix., p. 179, edit. 1747.)

Near the sources and banks of the rivers and their tributary streams, are mines of auriferous and argentiferous copper, and the rocks in the vicinity of these mines contain veins of the most beautiful and variegated marble and alabaster. The chains are composed of limestone to the north, and granite to the south. Volcanic rocks occur near Aroomia, and there also mineral springs are very frequent. The inferior ranges contain gypsum, coal, iron, and a stratum of white calcareous stone: pumice and whetstones are also met with. On Mount Zagros occurs a stone of extreme brittleness, filled throughout with a blue stratum which resembles the *firouzah**, or turquoise. Argillaceous

* The natives say that the name *firouzah* was given to this stone by Firouz-shah. Ansar, near Nishapour, in Khorasaun, is the best turquoise mine in the world. These stones vary greatly in colour; but all, except the azure, are considered of little value. A Persian assured me, that the turquoise of Nishapour changed its colour to green or white if kept in a box of musk, or if exposed to any great heat.

earths likewise occur, of various qualities and colours.

The mountains are clothed with forests to an elevation of about six thousand feet: above that height, the country is less covered; though, in some of the recesses, forests exist even in more elevated spots, and, where they reign triumphant, traces of habitations are "few and far between." The trees are the walnut (here a gigantic tree), beech, pine, oak (rather stunted), cedar, plane, mulberry (both white and red), cherry, apple, pear, medlar, and apricot. From the kernel of the fruit of the last tree an excellent oil is extracted, which the Koords use for culinary

Pliny remarks of the Kallais (turquoise), "*Quæ sunt earum pulchriores, oles, unguento et mero colorem dependunt.*" I have already remarked, that all Orientals have a great passion for this lovely stone, and value it higher than they do a diamond, as they say that it imparts a lustre to the eyes, and cures the ophthalmia. I procured a very large and perfect one from a native friend at Baghdad, who gave the above as a reason for not wishing to part with it.

and other domestic purposes. The bushes consist of the juniper, wild plum, wild rose saw-wert, wild madder, and vine. The liquorice root is burnt as fire-wood; the plant grows abundantly in stony and barren spots, and, on its thickest branches, lumps of gum form as large as a snake's egg. It attains the height of fifteen inches above the soil, in bushy tufts, and is covered with both smooth and scabrous pericarps. The botanical name is *Glycyrrhiza echinata*. The Koords call it *soos*. The wild vine is seen at times, twisted like a corkscrew around the loftiest trees; at others, intertwined like the strands of a cable, then drooping on the ground, and again taking root, and thus securely anchoring the tree against the fury of the sweeping storm.

Another plant, eminently deserving of notice, grows in thick round tufts covered with long spines. It covers the lowest tracts of country, sometimes to such an extent as to obstruct a traveller's progress through it.

This lowly shrub affords a most beautiful exemplification of the merciful care of Providence and the fitness of the Creator's designs. It abounds also in Arabia, India, Africa, Tartary, and Persia. In the vast deserts of those countries, it is the only food of the camel, that valuable inhabitant of such unfriendly wastes. These noble animals browse upon it in preference to any other herb. Their mastication of it produces a frothy salivation at the mouth, which appears to impart to them a very pleasurable sensation. Its lasting verdure refreshes the eye of a traveller, and, from the property possessed by its deep-searching, tough, fibrous roots, of collecting the scanty moisture of an arid plain, well known to the Bedouin, it is converted to the essential purposes of aiding in the production of a grateful and healthy nourishment for man. The stem of the plant is, in spring, divided to near the root; a single seed of the water melon is then inserted in the fissure, and the earth replaced about the

thorn. The seed becomes a parasite, and the nutritive matter, which the brittle, succulent roots of the melon are ill-adapted to collect, is abundantly supplied by the deeper searching and tougher fibres of the root of this thorn. An abundance of good water melons is thus periodically forced from saline soils, incapable of other culture. This valuable plant is the *Hedysarum alhagi*. It bears its small oval leaves but a few days in early spring; the beautiful crimson flowers appear later in the same season, and are succeeded by the short moniliform pod peculiar to this genus.

The favourable position of this lovely country, and the heavenly climate it enjoys, are the probable causes of its abounding in products which are rarely found together in any other part of the world. A deep and prolific soil prevails throughout most of the cantons of Zagros.

Niebuhr, who visited a part of Western Koordistaun, thus expresses himself regarding

it:—"Kurdestan est un paix montagneux et très fertile, surtout en noix de galle, desquelles il en va tous les ans une quantité étonnante à Haleb (Aleppo), et de là plus loin en Europe; en manne, dont on se sert dans cette contrée au lieu du sucre; en coton, ris, tabac, raisins, et figues. On cultive aussi icy du *Krab* (de la garance), *Fua*, *Kas*, une espèce de soie grossière qui doit croître sur les arbres, et du mastic (Alk), mais qui n'est pas si bon que celui de l'Isle de Chio. Comme les habitans de cette contrée montagneuse, quoique assujettis, ont toujours été gouvernés par leurs propres princes, ils ont encore conservé leur propre langage, qui à ce que l'on prétend, a trois dialectes differens:—celui du district 'Kalla Dsjola' tiendrait beaucoup de la langue Persane; celui de 'Koi Sandsjak,' beaucoup de la Chaldéenne et de l'Arabe; et, dans la partie septentrionale du Kurdestan, beaucoup de la Turquie*."

* Voyage en Arabie par C. Niebuhr, tome second, p. 268.

The geographical division of Koordistaun is nearly as follows:—

Koordistaun Proper, comprising the country lying between the degrees of northern latitude, $34^{\circ} 30'$ and 39° , and longitude, 41° and $45^{\circ} 30'$,—inhabitants about 500,000

Ardelan, 300,000

Adiabene, 200,000

Total number of inhabitants 1,000,000

Of this population, four-fifths are Soonnite Koords*; the remainder are composed of Chaldæan Christians, who are in alliance

* The author of the *Taurikh Akharad* states, that authors differ regarding the origin of the Koords. Some believe them to be descended from those persons who were saved from the cruelty of Zohauk: others trace them to the *genii*; while many state, that the *deeves* or demons connected themselves with women of the earth, and begot the Koords. This author also states, that Koord signifies “valiant,” and that Roostam, though born in Siestaun, was of a Koordish family. He says, that the common reading of *Roostum-e-Goord*, in *Ferdosi*. is erroneous, and that it should be *Roostum-e-Koord*, or Roostum the Koord. Volney notices the similarity of sound between the names *Koord* and *Goord*;

with a Koordish chieftain, by name Musapha Khan, of whom I shall have occasion to speak presently. They are divided into four tribes, the descendants of those Christians who fled from the persecution of Justinian, who are now established and governed by an hereditary priest, and to this day inhabit the recesses of Mount Jidda-Daug, whose altitude is little less than the Caucasian range.

In computing the population of Koordistaun, and taking into consideration the peculiar habits of the people, we may reckon, that a very great portion of the superficies of this country is uninhabited; indeed, no very correct estimate can be formed of the number of its inhabitants*. The oppression

and thence suggests that the original seats of the Koords may have been the Gordæan mountains, or the Gordœni; where, according to the Chaldæan Berosus, and the Armenian Maribas, cited by Moses Chorenensis, Xisuthrus landed after escaping from the deluge. The Koords boast of being the direct descendants of Noah.

* The Arabian traveller, Ebn Haukel, says, the journals (families) of the Koords are more than can be exactly

and cruelties they have endured ; the vengeance they have inflicted on their Turkish and their Persian neighbours ; and, above all, their retention of independence from the earliest ages up to the present day,—these circumstances combined, invest this country with a peculiar interest. The mountainous regions have at no period been under subjection either to the Turks or to the Persians.

Sir John Malcolm, in his elaborate History of Persia, thus alludes to the Koords:—

“ Though there are several cities in Koordistaun, the military tribes of that country seldom inhabit either towns or considerable villages ; nor do they assemble, except for purposes of war, in large encampments. The dwelling of the native of this province often solitary ; and, whether the Koords reside in houses or tents, it is seldom that more than a few families dwell together.

numbered. Some maintain two hundred persons, such as shepherds, and labourers, and grooms, and boys or servants, and such like. Their number cannot be ascertained.

This custom, whether it arises from the nature of the country, or from adherence to ancient usage, is calculated to retard every progress to improvement. We have, indeed, evidence of the inhabitants of this country continuing in an unchanged state for more than twenty centuries. Neither the rays of civilisation which enlightened Persia under Nourchirwaun, nor those that shone upon the neighbouring provinces of Arabia and Turkey, under the most celebrated of the Caliphs, ever penetrated amid the wilds of Koordistaun, though these were situated in the immediate vicinity of Ctesiphon and Baghdad. The Koord saw and despised a knowledge which was accompanied by an effeminacy and luxury that rendered man more subject to the oppression and cruelty of his rulers. He preferred the savage freedom which he enjoyed amid his rugged mountains, and felt a pride in the privations and hardships to which he was exposed, when he regarded them as associated with his independence. It is not surprising that

religion should never have made any great progress amid such a people. There is no proof of their ever having been zealous followers of the worship of Zoroaster; and though they now profess the faith of Mahomed, they are in general, not only inattentive to the substance, but careless in the observance of the ceremonies it prescribes. Among the ruder tribes of this country, the 'written law' meets with little attention. They continue to be governed by the usages of their forefathers, and yield an obedience to their chief, which he repays by his protection, and by exercising his authority on all occasions, with the utmost regard to their customs and prejudices*."

The learned D'Herbelot thus describes this nation:—"C'est une nation particulière,

* A remarkable instance of this occurred when I first visited Koordistaun. The mehmaundar told me, a man of a certain tribe had the day before murdered his father. "He will, of course, be put to death," I observed. "I do not think he will," said the mehmaundar: "he is himself heir, and there is no one to demand the blood."—"Will not the prince of the

et originaire des Monts Gordiens, qui sont une branche du Mont Taurus, et qui separent l'Arminie de la Haute Medie. Les anciens ont appelé ces montagnes, et les peuples d'alentour, Cordueni et Carduchi; et leur plus haute croupe est appelée aujourd'hui par les Turcs, Parmak Daghi, la montagne du doigt, à cause qu'elle est escarpée de tous côtez. Cette nation s'est repandue dans l'Assyrie le long de l'Euphrate et du Tigre, et a donné à ce pays le nom de Kurdistan, le pays des Curdes. Ils n'ont reçu que fort tard la loy Mahometane, et ont été presque toujours ennemis des Musulmans. Mirkhond rapporte, dans la Vie d'Omar le Khalife, et l'année 23 de l'Hégire, que les Curdes étant venus au secours des Persans, assiégez par les Musulmans dans un

country take care that this parricide does not escape? " — "The waly," he coolly replied, "cannot interfere in a case like this, unless appealed to; and, after all, if the affair be agitated, the murder will be compounded. Among Koords, who are always at war, the life of an active young man is much too valuable to be taken away on account of a dead old one!"

château sur le Tigre, ils envelopperent l'armée du Khalife, et la taillèrent en pièces. La maison des Jobites, de laquelle étoit Saladin, tiroit son origine d'une tribu de ces peuples, nommée Revadiat et Ravandiat. Cette nation établit une Principauté ou Dynastie dans le pays de Lor ou de Lar, de laquelle l'Auteur du Nighiaristan fait mention après celle des Cara Cathaiens. Les Curdes peuplèrent aussi plusieurs bourgades de l'Iraque, Babylonienne ou Chaldée, autour des marais appelez Nabatheens. Curdiah et Curtekiah, qui signifie en Turc, une Cosaque, a pris son origine d'un habillement des Curdes : comme nos Cosaques et nos Hongrelines sont prises des Cosaques et des Hongrois. Quelques auteurs ont cru que les Curdes sont Chaldéens d'origine, et qu'ils ont été nommez autrefois Keldan, comme les peuples de la Chaldée, qui sont appelez plus ordinairement, par les Hébreux et par les Arabes, Caschdânin*."

* D'Herbelot Bibliothèque Orientale, pp. 277, 278.

Xenophon says, "The people inhabiting the Carducian mountains were a warlike nation, and *not* subject to the king: once, the king's army, consisting of one hundred and twenty thousand men, penetrated into their country, from whence not one of them returned, the road being hardly passable. But, whenever there was a peace subsisting between them and the governor residing in the plain, there was an intercourse between the two nations*."

The mountaineers make war, like the

* The Expedition of Cyrus into Persia, by Xenophon. Vol. i. Book iii. page 234. Xenophon entered into the army of Cyrus the younger as a volunteer in his expedition against his brother, Artaxerxes, king of Persia. This enterprise proving unfortunate, Xenophon, after the death of Cyrus, advised his fellow-soldiers to attempt a retreat into their own country. They listened to his advice, and, having had many proofs of wisdom as well as courage, they gave him the command of the army in the room of Prozenas, who had fallen in battle. In this command he acquired great glory by the presence and firmness with which he conducted back the army, through the midst of innumerable dangers, into their own country.

nations of antiquity and the Arabs of the present day, not for any political object, but for the sake of booty, which is the price of their conquests. They are excessively jealous of their independence, and are delighted at the vicinity of their Turkish and Persian neighbours, as they are thus afforded the opportunity of enriching themselves. The horse and the sword had made them masters of the plain; they became feudal possessors of the territory under the tenure of service to the Shah, and held the lowland Koords as cultivators of the soil. But thousands removed to the impregnable fastnesses of the mountains, and, as the Turkish or Persian chain became heavier, they flung it off, and joined their free countrymen. The vacancies produced by such flights have, however, been gradually filled up by large emigrations; and, in whatever quarter these emigrants have settled, they have become active, hardy, and intrepid.

Turkish oppression on the one hand, and Persian despotism on the other, has been the

source of all the chief defects in the Koordish character. Its nature is so elastic, that it springs up in every momentary removal of the pressure. The greatest contrast to the inhabitants of the plains, who are generally cultivators of the soil, and known by the appellation of the "peasant Koords," is to be found in those mountainous retreats where the military Koords alone reside, and where no strangers dare venture to intrude. In such positions the Koords are hardy and brave, passionately fond of their homes and families, and subsisting on little. The picture, however, has its dark side—they are turbulent, envious, and treacherous. But, surely, these great defects would be the natural qualities of any people leading such wandering and distracted lives. In his most inaccessible hold—pent up between frightful passes—excluded from general communication by fathomless ravines—liable to immediate and sudden surprises from a merciless enemy, and, from his cradle to his grave, either the spoil or the

antagonist of the aggressor—afflicted by poverty—living a life of extreme hazard in constant flight or attack—how can it be expected that the Koord should possess the virtues that dignify human nature? There is no national character on earth that would not have darkened under this eternal rudeness of fortune. It is really surprising how the Koord has retained any qualities which entitle him to rank amongst men.

From time immemorial, Koordistaun has been a continued scene of war, turbulence, and robbery. Some of its south-eastern districts have occasionally paid a small tribute to Persia for the privilege of pasturing their flocks and herds in Ardelan free from molestation; but the whole disciplined army of the prince royal of Persia has never been able to reduce to subjection those numerous, fierce, and predatory chieftains of the western frontiers, who assert a perfect independence*. The form of the whole

* There are several districts in Koordistaun whose inhabitants *profess* allegiance to the monarch of Persia,

of that part of the country, indeed, is sufficiently favourable to such pretensions, being very mountainous, and intersected by the most frightful ravines, over which it would be extremely difficult to conduct an army, and, in some places, an utter impossibility; for the only communication the Koords have with each other, is by means of the trunks of trees slung over the ravines by ropes which are removed at pleasure. Arrian, in describing the march of Alexander against them, says, "This people are a very warlike nation, and inhabit the hills and mountainous parts of Media; and, therefore, confiding in their own valour and the fastnesses of their country, would never be brought to admit

but who are even *more* independent of all attempts at interference with their internal government than the province of Ardelan, because their mountains are more inaccessible. Among these, one of the most remarkable is a branch of the tribe Hakkarey, who dwell in that lofty ridge of hills which lies immediately west of the Lake of Ooroomia, and approaches the vicinity of the town of Salmas in Azerbijaun. (History of Persia, by Sir John Malcolm.)

of any foreign prince to reign over them, and were never subdued during all the time of the Persian Empire; and at that time they were so very high, that they slighted the valour of the Macedonians*." The valour of the Koords emancipated their country from the foreign rule of the successors of Alexander. For a short time the legions of Rome had occupied a part of Carducia, but they possessed little more than their military positions; and it is remarkable, that none of the numerous Tartar tribes who have overrun Persia have ever permanently fixed themselves in Koordistaun. Plutarch relates, that Artaxerxes marched into the country of the Carducians at the head of three hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand horse, and that his army would in all probability have been destroyed, had not Tiribazus, by infusing into the minds of the two kings of the Car-

* See Book xvii. c. 11, and Plin. Nat. Hist. Book vi. c. 27.

ducians a mutual distrust, induced them to make peace with the Persians*.

The Persian historian, Sherriff-al-Deen, in his history of this nation, asserts, that when an envoy from a chief of Koordistaun came before Mahommed, the prophet was so struck by his fierce looks and gigantic figure, that he prayed to God that so formidable a race should never be united; and hence those divisions which have ever since continued to distract this country.

The Illyauts, or wandering pastors of Koordish and Toorkomaun origin, roam over the more level country with their few sheep and goats, which, with some dates and milk, compose all their wealth. The Persians from Azerbijaun sometimes ravage the north-eastern frontier. The desolation and want of security occasioned by these expeditions can hardly be conceived. In some parts the open country has been swept of its inhabitants, who have been sold as slaves or put to the rack. The consequence is, that several

* Vide Langhorne's Plutarch, *passim*.

smiling hamlets have been reduced to heaps of ashes, and all cultivation devastated. Here the peasant Koord goes out to his ground with his matchlock slung across his back, too happy if, ere the hand of the spoiler has laid waste the produce of his husbandry, he can convey it to his granary in the mountains. Guards and sentinels are every where stationed to give him timely notice, not only of the enemy's approach, but also of the military Koord, from whose ill usage he is never secure, and who enjoys many privileges over the "Royahs," as these poor cultivators are called.

If to these evils, the protracted endurance of which is surely enough to dishearten the bravest people, we add the awful waste of human life, which, by the daily desolation to which these borderers are exposed, makes a mockery of the dearest of human ties, can we wonder that they should abandon themselves to despoliation?

Those tribes which range along the frontiers, differ in their habits, according to

the circumstances in which they are placed. In some parts they are pastoral, hospitable and kind to strangers; in others, they are reserved, and shun all intercourse; in others, again, they are predatory, cruel, and very ferocious. Of these last are the chieftains on the north-western frontiers, and in the neighbourhood of Van*. As a proof of this, I may cite the recent murder of that indefatigable traveller and antiquarian, Schultz, by the barbarian chief Mustapha Khan, of the great Koordish tribe of Hakkarey†. This

* The Lake of Van, or Wân, is about two hundred miles in circuit. Its waters are brackish, and yield a most delicious fish, which is salted and sent to every part of Asia Minor for sale. Several vessels are employed on this lake, and the greatest activity prevails upon its banks—a striking contrast to the deathlike silence that exists on Lake Ooroomia.

† Hakarie, un district du Kordestan, est à l'est de la seigneurie "Amadie," et dans le voisinage du gouvernement Turc, "Wan;" cette petite contrée est fort montagneuse, et est presque tout habitée par des "Nestoriens," qui ont leur propre patriarche, qui s'appelle toujours "Schemaun" (Simeon), et est entièrement indépendante de celui d'El Kosch. On dit que la

event took place near the hamlet of Bash-Kullah, to the westward of lake Ooroomia. Two servants, a Persian soldier, and a serjeant from Prince Abbas Mirza's army, were likewise assassinated. Poor Schultz was one of the Professors of the University of Giessen, sent out to visit Koordistaun for scientific and literary purposes at the sole expense of the king of the French. Our envoy at the Persian court, Sir John Macdonald Kinneir, instantly despatched a confidential person towards Van, to collect, if possible, the unfortunate traveller's papers and effects, and to take steps for punishing the murderers. What success attended the messenger I never heard; but I know that

Pascha de Wan y envoie un Begk, qui reside dans un village "Komerie," mais que les habitans ne se soucient guères de lui, et que, par la crainte d'être soumis entièrement au joug de Mahométans, ils évitent toute liaison avec eux. Les Nestoriens à Häkari ne permettent pas seulement, que des marchands Mahométans viennent chés eux, bien moins permettent-ils, que quelqu'un de cette religion s'établisse chés eux. (*Voyage en Arabie* par C. Niebuhr, tome ii., Amst. 1780.)

Major Hart fully intended to proceed to the stronghold of Mustapha Khan, with the determination of inflicting retributive vengeance on this perfidious murderer. The loss of Schultz, is as great as any which Oriental literature has ever sustained. It is, indeed, to be hoped that a portion, at least, of his extensive collections has been received by the French government, and that those which were in his possession at the time of his death were also recovered, so that the fruits of his laborious researches may not be lost to the scientific world.

On the borders of Georgia, to the north, we find the Koords attacking the towns and villages, and carrying away the prettiest Georgian and Circassian girls they can lay hold of. On the banks of the Tigris, to the south, they barter their captives to regular traders, who supply the harems of the wealthy residents of Baghdad, Bassorah, and other Turkish cities. Towards the east, they are not so cruelly disposed, though obliged, in self-defence, to assume a ferocious

character; but, nevertheless, they will carry on blood-feuds from father to son, like the Arabians, and also after the manner of the Greeks in the Morea.

Koordistaun is so mountainous and difficult, particularly in winter and early spring, that travellers very seldom pass through it. Large caravans do not even attempt the route, for there are only narrow footpaths leading either through thick forests, or beside dangerous precipices. Kafilahs, invariably pass by Teheraun and Ispahaun, into Fars, or, by Hamadaun and Kermanshaw, towards Adiabene and southern Mesopotamia. The Persians never think (except in their dreams) of entering it unless by compulsion or bribery—a little of both being invariably used. They even go so far as to declare, with the utmost seriousness, that if a poor traveller is ever caught trespassing on the Koordish frontier, he is severely beaten for not having brought sufficient property to make him worth robbing!

CHAPTER XI.

Forebodings—Koordish Villages—Caution to Travellers—The Koords—A Ruse de Guerre—The Koordish Country—Miserable Village—Hospitable Reception—Koordish Women—Koordish Banquet—Miserable Lodging—Mountain Pass—Perilous Road—Retreat of Xenophon—Carducians—Our Muleteer's Alarm—An Affray—Cowardly Mehmaundar—Mahommedan Piety—Fertile District—Picturesque View—Lovely Country—A Frank Avowal—Toorkomaun Encampment—Koordish Burial-Ground—Oriental Sepulture—Reverence for the Dead.

OUR muleteers were very slack in loading their mules, in consequence of having heard at the caravanserai during the night, that the Koords in this part of the country were a desperate set, caring for neither God nor devil—that they never took off their boots from one year's end to another, much less prostrated themselves in prayer—that, in fact, both ourselves and our cattle would be starved to death by entering the country, as it would be an utter impossibility to hold any communications with them. I had some little difficulty in lulling their ap-

prehensions; but, after giving a *douceur* to the old monkey-faced Katurjee-bashee (who, by the way, was a Hajee), we got him into good cheer, and, quitting the gates of Meandaub as soon as they were opened, directed our course to the southward, over a plain surrounded by calcareous mountains. We then struck into a deep valley, profusely covered with coarse weeds and herbage, through which flowed a stream formed by the melting of the mountain snows. When we got about half way up this valley, we saw several Koordish villages on our right, and some little cultivation which pastured the flocks and herds of the tribe. Their houses were meanly built of mud and chopped straw, and, although above the ground, were very low, having only one small door to admit the light and air, and being roofed with a thin thatching of reed*. There were others

* Otter, speaking of the Koordish encampments, says, "Comme ces gens n'ont point de maisons, ils font de grand trous dans la terre, où ils cachent si bien leurs grains qu'il est difficile de les trouver." (Otter, tom. i. p. 118.)

formed of two stone walls, with a covering of dark brown or black felt cloth, made of



the hair of goats, and every height was crowned by a watch-turret. These Koords had evidently chosen their present site for a residence, so as to levy contributions on every traveller that might pass their habitations. Although our people were dying with thirst, they would not stop, from the fear of being plundered. The Mehmaundar and myself, however, rode up to one of

these encampments, and were served with a bowl of "lubbon" by a tall, swarthy Koord, whose expression of countenance was peculiar and ferocious. He had long, sweeping moustaches, and dark, penetrating eyes. He saluted us with a civility quite at variance with his forbidding aspect; and I took the opportunity of asking him a few questions about the state of the roads and country. "In the present unsettled condition of Koordistaun," said he, "I advise you to keep a very sharp look-out, and I caution you against journeying after nightfall." We thanked him for his advice and civility, and rejoined our party. Our rate of travelling averaged at least four miles an hour, by which medium the muleteers reckoned their distances; between eight and nine hours being considered by them as a good day's journey.

We passed a large body of Koordish horsemen, all well armed and mounted. Their extraordinary dress and *tout ensemble* were so different from that of the Persians,

whom we had been accustomed to see for so long a period, that it gave a novelty to the scene, which was extremely interesting. Their benishes, arms, and the furniture of their horses resembled those of the Turks; and the ferocity of their demeanour was characteristic of their wandering, renegado lives. The whole group would have been a fine study of costume for Hayter's accurate pencil.

This was probably an expeditionary corps, as it consisted of at least a hundred men, followed by several horses with pack-saddles, ready to receive the booty (either live or dead stock) which they might be fortunate enough to capture. Seyyud Abdallah, the meh-maundar, said, that when an expedition of this kind is over, the Koords retreat with caution; but, at the same time, are ever ready to give battle, until they have reached their inaccessible mountains, and secured their plunder in a place of safety.

Two of the party joined us, and, in a mixed dialect of Turkish, Persian, and Hindoos-

tanee, asked me if we were going to Soolimaniah? "for," said they, "we also are anxious to visit that city, to pay our respects to Sooleymaun Basha, and, if possible, to obtain his head for a *football*." Not liking the appearance of these gentry, I determined to try at an escape by a *ruse de guerre*; so I exclaimed, with feigned astonishment, "Soolimaniah! Soolimaniah! we are bound for Hamadaun, to join a division of Prince Abbas Mirza's army, now *en route* to Kirmanshaw; whence we shall march against Sooleymaun Basha, from whom we expect to extort a considerable sum of money." This had the desired effect; for they faced to the "right about," and galloped off at a rapid pace towards their companions.

We rode on for thirty-six miles through a most productive and remarkably well cultivated country; the villages were so thinly scattered over it, that I was surprised to find so small an extent of land lying fallow. The inhabitants of these villages were cultivators, and shepherds also, which latter occupation is

not always combined with the former; their condition must have been thriving, if I might judge from the excellent quality of the land under cultivation, and the number of their flocks and herds*. There appeared a much greater extent of rich soil than they were able to cultivate, so they tilled only that which was situated nearest to their villages. These were well supplied with grain and wool, cheese and butter, which latter articles they dispose of to travellers, who they take care shall remunerate their generosity, and who, of course, always make an adequate return for the supply either in cash or presents of some kind or other.

The valleys which intersect this part of the country are always free from the excessive heats of summer, and, though chilly in some secluded spots, partake of a tolerably uniform and temperate climate. During the

* The military Koord holds the shepherd in great contempt; even the cultivator considers him in the light of an inferior. But the care of their flocks is generally assigned to their women and young children.

winter these valleys are covered with snow, and on the summits of the surrounding peaks, the patches do not disappear until the height of summer.

Continuing our route, we ascended an irregular and winding path, which brought us to the hamlet of Bogaum, situated on the bank of a small rill, which ran into the river Jakuntoo. Nothing could exceed the appearance of poverty which prevailed throughout this village, as Jaffer Kooli Khan, the governor of Maraughah, backed by five hundred men, had made a sudden attack upon the place by order of Prince Abbas Mirza. His royal highness directed that all the men taken alive might be hung upon the loftiest forest trees, and that the women should be destroyed by the sword. The khan was, however, obliged to retire after the loss of fifty of his own followers. Before he arrived, the Koords sent all their wives and children to the mountains, through rocky gorges, and over summits, which, to use their own expression, "are not often trodden

by human foot, and scarcely ever by the wild birds of heaven*.”

Being unable to procure any forage for the cattle, or even refreshments for ourselves, we left Bogaum long before the dawn of day. Miraâdy, the object of our march, lay about thirty-eight miles distant, over a road which appeared very rugged. About noon, we passed a lovely plain, and through it several small gurgling streams meandered, literally matted over with water-cresses. Our servants were quite surprised to see us eat of them so heartily, for they would not even taste any until I repeatedly declared they were most delicious. Previously to our *entrée* into the village, we were met by its chief, who conducted us to his castle, where he ordered his women to give up to us the best room they possessed in the harem court. They instantly set to work clearing away their domestic

* Upon this (an attack) the Carducians left their houses, and their wives and children fled to the hills.—(Xenophon’s *Anabasis*, or Expedition of Cyrus, Vol. i. Book iv. page 239).

utensils with the greatest good-humour, and lighted for us a cheerful fire, before which we spread our nummuds (carpets). These women crowded about Mrs. Mignan and the children with the utmost *empressement*, and accosted me with an air of the greatest cordiality; they had no wish, and certainly no reason to conceal their faces, which were fair and handsome, with large black eyes, and dark flowing hair. They went about entirely unveiled, and possessed no *mauvaise honte*, though it was considered a mark of rudeness to stare at them. Nevertheless, they were evidently much pleased at exciting our attention, and we clearly perceived that vanity was the characteristic of the sex, in this, as well as in other countries nearer home.

After being served with some delicious cheese made from the milk of sheep, and several excellent flat muffin-shaped cakes of bread, the chieftain of the village invited me to his own quarters, which were situated across an oblong square court-yard. A sheep was

slain, and, having been stuffed full of almonds and raisins, was now roasting before a roaring fire, around which several attendants were crouched. We discussed our meal à *l'Arabe*, and afterwards some of the party got up and danced around the room with great energy. They then chanted a war cry, which our mehmaundar, Seyyud Abdallah, assured me related to their robbing exploits, and to their successes over the Turks and Persians. They also had a regular chorus, in which all occasionally joined, and which pointed at the dishonour of a Koord flying from battle to his tents, where not only the tribe itself, but the very dogs shun the coward—

None shall wed the flying slave,
E'en dogs shall bay the dastard knave.

Seyyud Abdallah declared the whole party were marauders, and that some of them actually boasted of the number of Kuzzilbashes they had shot. This chieftain gave us dried fruits of several kinds, with deli-

cious sweetmeats and some most excellent sherbet.

On the morrow I smoked a chibouque with the village chief, and we then resumed our journey towards Soolimaniah, the capital of Koordistaun. The road led over several lofty ranges, whose summits were nearly divested of trees. Our position now became more elevated, until we at length reached a whole region of snow, which lay so very deep that our baggage mules had great difficulty in getting through it.

Towards sunset, we arrived at the outskirts of a miserable and dilapidated village, where we were kept waiting a long time before any shelter could be found for us, and, after all, were compelled to take possession of a hut, hastily emptied for the occasion, full of dirt and vermin. Every thing was in confusion, and our foolish mehmaundar Abdallah, instead of exerting himself, stood like a drunkard, biting his whip, without ever offering, on our account, the slightest assistance. Our evening meal was late and cold; and we

retired to rest as little pleased with ourselves as with our attendants.

Next morning, the inhabitants came in a body to assure us that it would be impossible to cross the mountains without lightening the mules; and that even then, the passage would be attended with the greatest difficulty. I thought this a mere pretext to extort money, so refused to employ them. However, they knew the state of the roads better than ourselves, and, following the muleteers, soon convinced us that their services were indispensable.

The morning was bitterly cold, and as we advanced towards the range we had to ascend, the cattle wound through a rut or channel, worn in the solid rock, where the width barely allowed our boxes to pass without touching its sides; we were frequently obliged to stretch out our feet in a horizontal direction, level with our horses' necks, to prevent them being cut or bruised by the rocks, which could not in any other manner be avoided. We found the northern side of this great

ridge extremely precipitous, and were most thankful to apply to the villagers for their assistance in supporting the loads, who triumphantly came forward shouting and laughing at our troubles.

The ascent was extremely steep and dangerous; it occupied the space of four hours, and the great depth to which the snow lay, proved so distressing to the mules, that we were forced to relieve them of their loads. Even this appeared to assist them very immaterially, as huge fragments of rock covered with snow lay on our track, and made them sink up to their girths at every step. Two of the poor mules, in endeavouring to recover themselves, rolled down a precipice with their burdens.

On nearing the summit, the road was so terribly furrowed by the dissolving snows, that I feared we should not have reached it; for the difficulty of this passage was considerably increased by the conduct of a strong body of Koords, who from the top of the mountain had been

watching our approach, and now commenced hurling large stones and fragments of rock upon those bearing our baggage.

In the expedition of Cyrus into Persia, and during the retreat of the ten thousand, it is said, that when Xenophon came to a valley which his men were to pass in order to climb the ascent, the Carducians rolled down vast round stones, these being dashed against the rocks in their fall, the splinters were hurled every way, which made it absolutely impossible to approach the road*.

Diodorus Siculus, as well as all other ancient writers, bears testimony to the war-like disposition of the Carducians. The ten thousand Greeks in their retreat to their own country, after the defeat of the younger Cyrus at the battle of Cunaxa, had to pass through their mountains, as they had determined to avoid the barren deserts by which they had approached from Issus, through Thapsacus, on the Euphrates, to

* The Expedition of Cyrus, Book iv., p. 247, Vol. i.

Babylon. These Carducians are described as a free and warlike people, enemies to the king, and very good soldiers, especially skilful and experienced in hurling great stones out of slings, and shooting in bows of a vast size and more than ordinary strength. These people galled the Grecians from the rising grounds, killing and wounding many of them; for their arrows, being above two cubits long, pierced both their shields and breast-plates, so that no armour could repel their force; and it is said that these sort of weapons were so extraordinary big, that the Greeks used to cast them as "Saurians," instead of their thong darts*. The posterity of these Carducians used the same weapons with the same success against the Romans in the expedition of Marcus Crassus, the death of whose son, who was pierced by these irresistible arrows, is so pathetically described by Plutarch. Mark Antony and his men, in their unfortunate retreat, felt the violent

* See Diodorus Siculus, Book xiv., cap. 5.

effect of them, which drew from him this exclamation, ὦ μύριοι! Happy the ten thousand Greeks, who being pursued by the same enemies, retreated with so much better success*.

Our old Katurjee Bashee, who had all along been quaking for the safety of his jaded mules, became seriously alarmed. "Stakhferullah!" he exclaimed, "there is enough of them to eat us; may the holy prophet Mahommed (blessed be his name) soothe their fury; ullah ukbar! God is most gracious! Had we only a dozen brave Kuzzilbashes we might have a chance with them, but, as it is, I shall certainly become a beggar. Ullah kereem! Ai kumbuckt! what dust has fallen on my head! oh, miserable man that I am!"

By the time we had reached the top of the mountain, the onward progress of the mules had been completely arrested, and our trunks thrown down upon the snow. The

* Xenophon's Works, as translated by Smith, p. 239

fray now began in real earnest with huge club-sticks, sabres, and matchlocks ; the latter being surmounted by a double prong which was made exactly like an English haymaker's pitchfork.

The enemy soon lost the support of four of their party, who had been felled by " stout crab-tree," and were conveyed from the scene of action with broken heads ; and the remainder would, in all probability, have given way to this " argumentum baculinum " where so little was to be gained, had it not been for the presence of two or three of the ringleaders, who possessed a stubborn and determined spirit, urging on the others to revenge their wounded companions. When my family had alighted from the kajavahs, and I had conducted them to a high bank on the roadside, I loaded my pistols and went amongst the assailants, declaring I would shoot the leader if he did not desist. They then shouted out, " They are gunmen ; they have guns." This cooled their rage in a marvellous degree, and, on their retreating

to the mountain's edge, we pressed them hard, and succeeded in rolling them over its precipitous sides, whilst the snow shelved down upon their heads and nearly buried them beneath it.

Our Persian mehmaundar Abdallah, who had remained an inactive spectator of the whole scene, without ever moving a limb or a muscle, and whose courage oozed out at his very palms, like that of Bob Acres, now came forward, and, bowing respectfully, said, "Barik-ullah! mash-ullah! bravo! bravo! well done! excellent! may your servant find grace in your eyes; may your shadow never grow less!" but, instead of greeting him with the "Khosh amadeed," or even noticing his obsequiousness, I desired the fellow to return to Azerbijaun, as we intended henceforward to dispense with his services. This useless character had very coolly pocketed his tomaun a-day, but I took care to forward a "confidential report" of his cowardly behaviour by a return kossid (messenger), to my friend, Major Hart, who I subsequently

learnt succeeded in having him punished by the government authorities at Tabriz.

The result of this *fracas* was so satisfactory to us all, that our old monkey-faced muleteer and his assistants became much animated, and swore they would disgrace the mother of Abdallah on their return to Tabriz. They involuntarily exclaimed, “ Poondh-be-Khoo-dah, God be praised, there is no deity but God, and Mahommed is his prophet.” They also recited as they went along a part of the first chapter of the Koran, which all Mahommedans hold in great veneration; indeed, they esteem it as the quintessence of the whole book, and therefore frequently repeat it, as we do the Lord’s prayer—“Praise be to God, the Lord of all creatures; the most merciful, the King of the day of judgment. Thee do we worship, and of thee do we beg assistance. Direct us in the right way, in the way of those to whom thou hast been gracious; not of those against whom thou art incensed, nor of those who go astray*.”

* Vide the Koran of Mahommed.

After a most sudden and fatiguing descent from the mountain, which occupied several hours, we traversed its base in a southerly direction, passing on the right of a ruined karavanserai, whence most probably our assailants had issued. This mountain terminated abruptly in a sharp point; after rounding which, we entered upon a more open country, but still mountainous. The soil of all the valleys appeared of unequal fecundity, and was well watered by numerous small streams. The climate now became more moderate, and extensive tracts of open meadow land were observed, as were also several small hamlets, whose inhabitants sell the produce of their flocks and herds to the villagers of Bannah. Here also, we remarked the dwarf oak in extensive patches intermixed with rocks, which were matted over by creepers. We soon entered a thick jungle*, and wound through an endless

* The term "thick jungle" includes all cover, from close bush to forest trees.

variety of forest scenery. The masses of shade thrown down from the fantastic crags that burst abruptly forth—the luxuriant fertility of the hills, seen through the transparent clouds that floated along their forest-crested summits—the awful stillness, and the immensity of individual objects, teemed with beauty and delight. We gazed amid these wilds, until we turned away with a painful fulness at heart, as if our pleasure was too great for the frame that felt it. The snow-capped mountains were towering before us; the sea of forests spreading around: far below, a beautiful stream rippled in the sun, and sent up the music of its splash. The small oriental sepulchre, overshadowed by the turfah* (*Tamarix orientalis*), crested the banks on the opposite shore, whence streams spread through the bright green

* The turfah, or tamarisk, is a well-known tree which the people of Baghdad plant over their graves, and in other situations. It rivals the tallest cypresses in stature. (See the Arabic *Materia Medica* of Ibn Kibti, the Baghdadi, who flourished A. H. 711).

land they fertilised to where a bulwark of hills rose to the clouds beyond the white summits of Mount Zagros. In his description of this lovely country, Diodorus Siculus says, "In this part there are many shady valleys, a variety of pleasant gardens, natural walks, bounded on either side with all sorts of trees, and watered with refreshing springs, so that those who journey this way frequently halt here, and regale themselves in these pleasant places with great delight*."

To guide us through this sylvan bower, we hired a Koordish shepherd, who appeared to have just returned from the village of Bannah, and who performed his task most faithfully, being allowed no temptation to do otherwise. During the march, we passed a well-mounted troop of suspicious-looking fellows, who, as they greeted our guide, inquired most particularly after our health, and excited something more than my curiosity. I therefore told our servant, Meerza

* Diodorus Siculus, Book xix. cap. 2.

Hoossain, to ask him if these strangers would have relieved the mules of their loads, had we been fewer in number, or less prepared? "To be sure," he replied; "and *we* (meaning his own villagers) would do the same. Do you suppose that a Koord has any scruples, when a fair opportunity offers?" This frank avowal was uttered with the greatest *sang froid* imaginable, and created a hearty laugh amongst the Katurjees, who remarked that the guide would have no "fair opportunity" this trip, so we journeyed on together, highly pleased with our new companion, until the necessity of our acquaintance ceased. A very trifling "bucksheesh," for having thus profited by his *connoissance du pays*, satisfied him.

We passed an extensive Toorkomaun encampment beneath the declivity of an overhanging rock, which was covered with little black tents. The wild appearance of this camp, mingled with horses, asses, sheep, and goats, was highly characteristic of the place as the men met our sight, grouped together around

a fire which emitted its thin column of smoke. Had *we* known of their vicinity, we should decidedly have taken a circuitous route; and had *they* been aware of our approach, our baggage mules might have been lightened. These Toorkomauns were very inquisitive, demanding whence we came, whither going, &c., and ended their discourse by endeavouring to persuade us to remain during the night under the protection of their tents.

A little to the northward of Bannah, we crossed several rills, on the borders of which the marsh marigold (*Caltha palustris*) and the water-cress (*Sisymbrium nasturtium*) were inconceivably abundant. Not far hence was an extensive burial-ground, in which the graves were all distinct and separate, each having a rough block of calcareous sand-stone placed upright, both at the head and foot of the grave; while the intermediate space, instead of having a slab placed down horizontally, was planted with flowers, or covered with broken pieces of tile and pottery.

None of these stones had any inscriptions, but over some few graves (of chieftains, perhaps) were built low circular cupolas, ornamented, plastered, and whitewashed.

There certainly exists a resemblance between the funerals of the Koords and those of the Hebrews. Every reader of the Bible must remember the anxiety expressed by Jacob to be buried in the family sepulchre in Canaan. "And the time drew nigh that Israel must die: and he called his son Joseph, and said unto him, If now I have found grace in thy sight, put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh, and deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt :

"But I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place. And he said, I will do as thou hast said.

"And he said, Swear unto me. And he swore unto him. And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head.

"And he charged them, and said unto

nem, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite.

“And Joseph went up to bury his father: and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt*.”

Joseph likewise exacted an oath from his people to take his remains with them when they might leave Egypt.

“And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

“And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence†.”

In like manner, if a Koord dies at a distance from his native village, the inhabitants are bound to remove the corpse, and inter it with decency. We more than once met

* Genesis, chap. xlvii. 29, 30, 31; chap. xlix. 29; chap. l. v. 7.

† Genesis, chap. l. 24, 25.

parties escorting one who was "never more to smile or weep in this mortal world," and, on asking a few questions of them, they spoke of the ill luck that would attend those who might neglect to convey a body to its "proper place of rest." Unlike the Persians, the Koords have a great respect for these "cities of the silent." We saw some graves decorated with flowers and garlands, which, we were told, after a certain period were removed. The Egyptians also observe a similar custom. Maillet says, "the women in Egypt go at least two days in the week, to pray and weep at the sepulchres of the dead: and the custom then is to throw upon the tombs a sort of herb, which the Arabs call 'rihan,' and which is our sweet-basil."

CHAPTER XII.

Bannah—Conversation with Travelling Turks—Luxuriant prospect—Beauty of Koordistaun—Extensive View—Bostan—Vegetable Productions—Horses—Flocks and Herds—Butter—Koordish Encampments—Koordish Houses—Passage of Zagros—Xenophon's Retreat—Tumuli—Soolimaniah—Military Force—Trade of Soolimaniah—Its Climate—Its Husbandry—Honey and Manna.

WE reached Bannah at nightfall, nearly exhausted by fatigue and hunger. It appeared to be a miserable hamlet; but the chief gave us the best house in the place, and some excellent coffee. I wonder how these people lived before the discovery of this beverage. In the most obscure khan you are sure of meeting with a "kowwajee," and if you refuse the proffered cup, it is considered a very great breach of civility.

Some Turks had just arrived from the "Burreah," or flat country bordering the Tigris. During the evening, they sent in to request that I would share a pipe and coffee

with them. After we had smoked together in silence for some time, one of them, who was treated with marked deference and respect by the others, said—

“ We have just arrived here from Baghdad, and are travelling ‘chapper’ (post) to Tabriz. May we ask, whence you come, and where you are going? Have you any money, or any powder? Are you a Russian (*ooroose**) spy? Perhaps you intend to enter Daoud Pasha’s service. Do you know he has already taken one ‘Feringhee†,’ (alluding to Lieutenant Littlejohn, formerly Adjutant of H. M. Second, or Queen’s royal regiment of foot, at Bombay), who is teaching the Arab fellahs to make fools of themselves?” One of his companions here interrupted him, saying—“ That man was not a ‘Feringhee,’ but one of the ‘Ingreese‡,’ from Hind, and

* This word signifies either a Russian subject, or the country lying to the north-west of Georgia.

† Feringhee, Frank. The name given in these countries to Europeans generally.

‡ Ingreese, Englishmen, women, or children.

a sharp fellow too; though I don't like to see such changes, or the Tchokodars may be turned into the Great Desert."

After they had rattled on in this way for some time, I asked them what had occurred at Baghdad? Another Turk now raised his head, and, without ceasing to attend to a large coffee-pot that was on a charcoal fire, began thus—"By my soul! Daoud Pasha, although he is our master, is a very rebel. He will soon have neither Tartars*, nor Tchokodars†: he prefers those Giaours to us already. What can we possibly do, if the pashas are allowed to eat us as they like? We must all fly to these mountains, and become Koordish robbers! We have good reason to be discontented, when *we* are taxed instead of those uncircumcised dogs of infidels. Even the 'ooroose' have revolted against Mahmood, and the 'Ingreese' (English nation) now refuse to pay us any tribute. Mahmood

* Turkish messengers, couriers, and postmen.

† Ich-Agásis of the Pashalic of Baghdad, pages of the pasha's presence.

Sooltaun is more like one of your nation than a true believer. He likes all your ways better than his own : he has even learnt to drink like ' Shytaun ' (Satan). But, God is great : Mahommed is his prophet ! He distinctly foretold all these changes ; and as for that son of a dog Mahommed Ali, Pasha of Egypt, who has done all this, may ' Ullah ' grant that his eyes will burst ! " " Inshallah ! Inshallah ! (Please God, it may be so !)" shouted the rest of the Turks, who appeared highly amused with their companion's harangue, and who continued for some minutes bestowing upon it their utmost applause.

On our quitting Bannah, the temperature became much milder, although our elevation was still great. The country was hill and dale, and overspread by one continued coat of verdure. The sloping sides of the mountains were covered with the oak and walnut-trees ; and to us, who had seen so much bareness of wood in Persia, it was a luxuriant prospect. The road led through wild and rocky defiles, and by the side of a rapid torrent. We

followed its rills, which were finely fringed with willows: it is this plentiful supply of water which renders these tracts so fertile. In Persia, on the contrary, this blessing is most scantily given; the hills and plains are equally destitute of wood, and a few trees only are seen in the environs of cities. Whoever has travelled through Turkey, Persia, and Koordistaun, as we have done, will assuredly admit the superiority of the latter country, in grandeur, beauty, and fecundity. But, since the beginning of that time from which we have any authentic records of her history, wars, dissensions, and violent struggles, have scared away improvement, and Koordistaun is still

“ An unweeded garden

That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely.”

In ascending another lofty ridge, the poor mules had to walk upon the very edge of a precipice, where the least false step would have consigned them to inevitable destruction; yet the confidence of the muleteers in

the steady tread of their animals, was such as to make them trot on without the slightest apprehension. From the summit of this range, a most sublime and extensive view burst upon the eye. Immediately in front of us appeared the snowy chains of Mount Zagros towering to the heavens, and beneath them several minor ranges extended gradually to near the base of the ridge we were commencing to descend; while on either side, and in the rear, were hills of various elevations, seen from the most advantageous point, and from a distance calculated to produce the most striking effect. Here was an assemblage of natural beauties—precipitous mountains, rich valleys, clear brooks, fantastic rocks, and wooded crags. Man alone has steeped this beautiful country in gloom, and rendered its history full of suffering.

The passes over the mountains of Koor-distaun are of the highest interest to a traveller, as he has an opportunity of observing portions of the earth which must, from their very nature, have been in their present state since

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the creation. In their deep recesses he may observe, from the wonderful and varied position of their stratification, what have been the operations of Nature on the grandest scale. This converse with "Nature's charms" cannot fail to rouse the breast of any man to meditations bordering upon rapture.

Before we reached the mountain's base, we saw the capricious windings of the Bostan river, that issues from one of the Karducian ranges. Bostan, being interpreted, signifies the "garden," giving its name to a small hamlet and vale situated on the southern bank. The whole of the surrounding country is exceedingly fertile and picturesque, and its natural resources rival any part of Asia. It therefore well deserves the name of "Bostan." The hills are clothed in wood; the villages "navelled" in trees; and the soil being wonderfully prolific, manure is nowhere used. All the plains are planted with fruit-trees, and strewed with grain. The slopes of the hills form vineyards, and produce the Palma Christi, or castor-oil tree (*Ricinus*

communis, Linn.), from whose seeds the oil is extracted, and the tobacco plant (*Nicotiana tabacum*). Their summits are browsed over by flocks of sheep and goats; while horned cattle graze upon the lawns that skirt the villages. The vegetable productions are very exuberant. Wheat (goom), barley (shayeer), peas and every other kind of pulse, are abundant and cheap. Grapes and melons are not so richly flavoured as the Persian, yet stone fruits, such as cherries, plums, peaches, apricots, and nuts, are as fine as I ever ate in any part of Azerbijaun. The Koordistaun walnut is the largest in the world, and, if we except the strawberry, gooseberry, and currant, all the European fruits are abundant. The cattle are small but of a good breed, and so are the goats and sheep. These latter sell for about a shilling each, and their skins at a penny of our money. The horse, although decidedly inferior to the Arabian in form, is a match for him in enduring fatigue, privations, and sure-footedness in traversing a precipitous line of territory. It is not possible to name

any part of the world where he is better treated, nor can any one be more skilful in managing him than the Koord. His secret consists in using him with the utmost kindness; no blow is ever inflicted; consequently he is always on his mettle, and delighted to obey his master. Like the Arabian, he is from his earliest age reared amongst the children of the family, who bestride him without the aid of halter or bridle, and when old enough for use, no means of breaking him in is ever resorted to*. He then becomes proverbial for performing the most surprising journeys. Sir John Macdonald Kinneir assured me that, in one of his many journeys through Turkish Arabia and Asia Minor, he had ridden a horse which he had procured from a Koord, a distance of at least seventy miles without once alighting from his back; and in June 1828, I purchased a gelding

* The Arabs often use their colts on their attaining their sixteenth month, which is, of course, highly injurious to them. The Koords, on the contrary, never cross them until they have entered the third year.

from a native of Soolimaniah, which carried me from Baghdad to Tiflis in sixteen days. The distance *viâ* Koordistaun (the way I then also took) is at least eight hundred miles. In my opinion, geldings are infinitely preferable to stallions for long and fatiguing journeys. The endurance of these animals is surprising. Pliny says, "the Sarmatians, when they were about to make a great journey, prepared their horses two days before, by giving them no meat at all, and allowing them only a little to drink; and then it was said they were enabled to gallop them one hundred and fifty miles an end, without drawing in their bridles*."

All the flocks and herds yield much cheese and butter. The cows afford about half a gallon of milk daily, and the sheep and goats also assist to supply the dairy: cheese being always made of their milk. It is not made so well as it might be, though it is milk white, but too dry and salt. The butter is well flavoured, but of no consistency.

* Plin. Nat. Hist. Book viii. p. 42.

When kept in skins the taste is disagreeable, and it is often full of hairs. It is churned by putting the cream into a goat's skin, which is suspended to a cord, and tossed backwards and forwards by the females of the family. M. Castellan says, the Bedouin Arabs practise the same method. " Dans un peau de chèvre, encore garnie de ses poils, ils mettent le lait, comme dans une outre. Une femme Bedouine, après avoir fortement noué les deux bouts, et suspendu le tout à une branche d'arbre, en secouant l'outre de toute sa force, parvient à faire le beurre*." A fine oil for lamp-burning is extracted from the seeds of the simsin, or *Sesamum orientale*, and the seeds are also sprinkled on their loaves, which are made as flat and as round as our own pan-cake. The taste is by no means disagreeable.

The fixed hamlets of the Koords are not numerous as compared to those in the Persian or Turkish territories, where, over a similar extent of country, innumerable small

* Castellan, Mœurs des Ottomans, t. vi. p. 60.

villages may be met with. Numerous tribes of Koords live, even in the winter, under canvass, and pasture their flocks in the neighbourhood of their tents. In early spring, when the buds and blossoms appear, they strike their camp, pack all their property on the backs of their cows and oxen, and, with their wives and children, ascend, day by day, higher and higher upon the mountains; where, as regards climate, they enjoy an earthly Elysium. They are most particular in planting their picquets, which are relieved at stated hours during the day and night, and with the greatest regularity, so that they never fear a surprise; and being well armed with long lances and bucklers, pistols and sabres, fixed in and slung to their waist-belts, have nothing whatever to fear, should the enemy approach. The villages are all built in the same style; of large unhewn stones, which have no binding material whatever. They consist of two rooms only, having the floor and walls plastered with mud, and a roof

formed by cross beams of wood, covered with reeds, and over all, a thick layer of mud, mixed up with chopped straw. They are generally seated either upon the declivity of a mountain, or on the sloping sides of lesser hills and heights, whose summits are frequently crowned by a fortress, the paths leading to which not being discernible; indeed, their houses are, for the most part, concealed with great care and mystery. As they are buried in thickets, folded in the windings of a glen, scattered on the brow of a ravine, or the brink of a precipice, a stranger may travel through much of this romantic wilderness without discovering any traces of them.

We remained the night in one of these hamlets, and left, shortly after day-break, to cross Zagros, and proceed to the capital of the kingdom. The morning was unusually sultry; and during our journey a dreadful storm of rain, hail, and sleet, accompanied by violent gusts of wind, thunder, and lightning, broke upon us. We were soon enveloped in a thick fog, which reminded me

of the situation of the ten thousand Greeks under Xenophon, during their ever-memorable retreat over these very mountains. They were hidden from the enemy by a *mist*, similar in density to the one we now experienced; for we could not even see the roadside, although we were only two yards distant. We appeared to be riding on the bosom of the clouds. The road was so slippery as to render the utmost caution necessary, and all around was of a Stygian darkness. The forked lightning that shot through the mist, was the best light we had to depend on, for the black clouds hung so completely around us, that we were at length obliged to take shelter under an overhanging rock. There was no hope, however, of the storm ceasing, and, afraid of being benighted, we again set forth.

Having reached an immense height, the clouds suddenly swept away, and a vast extent of mountain, ravine, and glen, lay exposed to our glance, but they were again as quickly obscured by the passing clouds. Still

ascending, we came to a point whence we indistinctly saw the city of Soolimaniah, situated, apparently, beneath our very feet, in the hollow of an undulating plain, encompassed by an amphitheatre of mountains. Our descent became extremely difficult, for the path was entirely furrowed by mountain torrents, that wriggled across our track like serpents. The jagged rocks rose perpendicularly on either side, covered with patches of dwarf oak, and a vast variety of wild briars and shrubs. Occasional openings afforded glimpses of the undulating valleys below; in other parts, again, the gorges were so narrow and precipitous, that a small portion of the zenith only was visible.

We found this pass far more difficult than any part of Mount Caucasus. It answers the description given by the guides of Xenophon. "In their march, they came to a mountain that commanded the road, and was possessed by the enemy, whom they were either to dislodge, or to be severed from the rest of the Greeks. Encouraging one another, they

made their attack upon the mountain in columns, not surrounding it, but leaving the enemy room to run away, if they were so disposed. Accordingly, the barbarians, seeing our men marching up the hill, every one, where he could, without discharging either his arrows or his darts upon those who approached the road, fled and quitted the place. The Greeks, having marched by this hill, saw another before them also possessed by the enemy. This they resolved to attack likewise; but Xenophon considered that, if he left without a guard the hill they had already taken, the enemy might repossess it, and from thence annoy the sumpter-horses, as they passed by them, for, the way being narrow, there was a long file of them*."

It is extremely difficult to trace his exact route from the account given by Xenophon of his retreat, but, unless a total change has taken place in the features of the country, this must be the pass by which he crossed

* Xenophon's Works, page 238.

Mount Zagros in his passage to the Euxine, since no other is practicable during the depth of winter; and it was at that inclement season of the year (January) that the retreat was effected by the ten thousand Greeks*. Although six hundred leagues from their native home, in a country surrounded on every side by a victorious enemy, without money, provisions, or a leader, Xenophon, the moment he was selected from among the officers to superintend the retreat of his countrymen, rose superior to every danger. Notwithstanding the continued day and night attacks of the Persians, he crossed the rivers and deserts of Assyria, gained the summit of the Carducian mountains, and refreshed his fatigued companions. This celebrated retreat was at length most happily effected; and the

* The whole of Koordistaun is highly elevated and excessively cold for the greatest part of the year. The severity of the frosts is more painful of endurance than that of most northern latitudes, for the valleys are from five to six thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the tops of the hills covered with snow for eight out of the twelve months.

brave Greeks returned to their homes, after a march of one thousand one hundred and fifteen leagues, which was performed in two hundred and fifteen days! There is not, assuredly, any military exploit like it in all history. Napoleon's celebrated retreat from Moscow was nothing compared to this; for any good pedestrian may perform the journey from Moscow to Paris in little more than a fortnight, and the French grand army got relief in Saxony, which enabled them to fight the battle of Leipzic. But here was fighting every inch: sixteen hundred miles from home, surrounded by thirty millions of enemies, their retreat cut off, and an army of eight hundred thousand men ready to oppose them at every step! The whole of these particulars would have been buried in oblivion, had not the great philosopher who planned it, employed his pen in describing the dangers he had escaped, and the difficulties he had surmounted.

On nearing the city of Soolimaniah, we passed a tope or mound of considerable

magnitude, which appeared like an artificial elevation, or gigantic molehill, perhaps thrown up to mark the tomb of some great chieftain. Indeed, throughout the whole country, many of these tumuli can be traced spreading over plains, and situated near running streams. I cannot, however, identify any of them as tombs from personal examination, though I do not doubt that research would be amply repaid, and that these heaps would disclose the ruined sepulchres of the Greeks or Romans.

Soolimaniah is most romantically situated on the northern bank of the Diala* (the Delos), in a rich, extensive, and well-watered valley, irregularly formed by the base of the surrounding mountains. It is supposed to be on the site of the ancient Siozuros, *vel*

* The illustrious Rennell, in his map of the environs of Babylon, calls this river the Median Choaspes, to distinguish it from the Susian Choaspes. It is also known by the name of Delos, both in our own modern maps, and in the country itself.

Shehrazour*. The city, unlike most Mahomedan towns, is unwalled; its houses are flat-roofed, low, and well secured against the cold and snows of this elevated region; but its streets, like all Oriental towns, are irregular, narrow, and dirty, though its climate is decidedly fine, and the inhabitants, who approach to the number of twenty-five thousand, are hardy, active, and robust. Their expressions of countenance are, however, harsh, and their complexions dark.

* Scheherzour, le nom d'une ville du pays des Curdes; qui habitent dans la province de Fars. Cependant, cette ville appartient plutôt à la Babylonienne, ou Chaldée, et l'auteur du *Leb Taurikh*, dit qu'Alexandre le Grand y mourut, ce qui s'accorde mieux avec nos historiens Grecs et Latins, qui font tous mourir ce prince dans la ville de Babylone. Les Turcs appellent ordinairement cette ville, Scheherzoul, qui passe pour être la capitale du Curdistan. (D'Herbelot de Molainville, *Bibliothèque Orientale*, Paris, 1697, p. 783.) Shehrazour is a town which the Koords have seized on. The Turks call it Sheherzoul. (Ebn Haukal.) According to Persian chronicles, Alexander the Great died at this place. (See the *Epitome of the Universal History of Persia*, p. 26.)

The government of Soolimaniah is administered by a pasha, who is by birth a Koord, subject to neither Turk nor Persian. To please the Russians, he has occasionally sent a present in cash to the Prince Royal of Persia, and Field-Marshal Paskewitch is desirous of taking him under his *especial* protection, that in case of need he may be induced to furnish cavalry to harass, by their sudden and repeated incursions, the inhabitants of those countries by which they are bounded*. For such a duty they are eminently fitted. The military force for the defence of the town does not exceed two thousand men. About a fourth of that number are often in attendance at the palace, which is the pasha's residence. It is a mean and dilapidated-looking pile, composed of spacious courts and extensive enclosures. The trade of the place is very inconsiderable, and is

* A Koordish chieftain assured Fraser, that if a thousand Europeans of any nation made their appearance amongst them, twenty thousand Koords would immediately rise and join them.

entirely in the hands of a few Armenians, who are the agents for some wealthy Baghdad merchants. They send gall-nuts, gum, manna, dried fruits, nuts, tobacco, and many other productions of the country down to Baghdad, receiving in exchange a few Indian commodities, which are conveyed up by the Tigris from Bassorah. They also supply all the wants of the migratory tribes, receiving in payment the produce of their flocks and herds, which they either use, resell on the spot, or export. Sir John Macdonald Kinnear, in his map appended to his valuable geographical memoir of the Persian empire, has marked down Sennah as the capital of Koordistaun. But the wâly, or chieftain of that town, is a mere creature dependant on his majesty of Persia, to whom he transmits an annual tribute. The father of the present wâly was an independent chief, but he became deranged; indeed, madness seems to run in the family, for the son has given many proofs of it. Were he residing in England, a commission of lunacy would

be immediately taken out against him by some considerate and *disinterested* philanthropist.

Soolimaniah forms a central emporium for the produce of the neighbouring districts, which furnish a vast quantity of grain; especially the undulating plains and valleys, which, being well watered by numerous small streams, are of unequalled fertility; whilst, on the sloping spurs of the mountains, the soil is stony and arid, and, of course, less productive. In the months of December and January, deep snow falls, and the streams are partially frozen up. Towards the end of February and March, milder weather sets in, and in April it is warm on the plains. In May and June, rain prevails, and during July, August, and September, the days are sufficiently hot. The easterly wind always bears the sirocco along with it, which induces the same enervating effects as is experienced in the Mediterranean. The westerly breezes are, however, always cool and pleasant. The cultivators around Soolimaniah turn up their fields for a few inches only in depth, with

a plough of the lightest and most simple construction, drawn by a pair of oxen. Towards sunset they quit their labours, throwing their ploughs over their shoulders, and return with them again in the same manner on the morrow. In some parts of the country, the share even is of wood, and the implement itself of the same light construction as it appears to have been in the days of Samuel.

In the vicinity of Soolimaniah, they begin to prepare the ground for sowing in March, and gather the harvest during summer (June). Wheat (*Triticum sativum*, Linn.), of which there are two or three varieties, was said to yield, in the most fertile positions, from ten to twelve fold, and in others from seven to eight fold. Barley (*Hordeum vulgare*, Linn.) is sown alternately with wheat on the same ground*. Cotton (*Gos-*

* Pliny says the wheat and barley had "leaves of the breadth of four fingers," (Lib. i. s. 193.) "Though I know," says Herodotus, "that the millet and the sesame of that country grow to the size of trees, I will not describe them particularly, lest my account should be considered fabulous."

sygium herbaceum), rice (*Oryza sativa*), maize or Indian corn (*Zea mays*, Linn.), sugar cane (*Saccharum officinarum*), millet (*Holcus saccharatus*), clover (*trifolium*), are all very abundant. The other productions of the valley are various: consisting of beans, lettuces, lentils, melons, cucumbers, leeks, garlic, onions, and an infinite number of leguminous herbs and vegetables. The hilly parts are covered with aromatic plants, yielding to the bees, who hive in the crevices of hollow trees, such an abundance of honey as to supply the inhabitants with an article of food, and with wax for sale. Honey from the rocks, is repeatedly referred to in the Holy Scriptures as a delicious food, and as an emblem of plenty; and manna, which fell from heaven to feed the Israelites in the Desert, here forms an article of food and commerce. It exudes spontaneously from the stem of the "camel's thorn," and when gathered by the peasants, is found mixed with decayed leaves, which give it a dark green colour; but, when purified, it becomes

as white as loaf sugar. Its consumption, in the confectioners' shops at Baghdad and Bassorah, is immense; and would, doubtless be a great acquisition, if procurable, at Verrey's, in Regent-street. Its taste is sweet, and, I think, very agreeable. All Mahommedans in this country are extremely fond of manna; especially the women, who use it with their sherbets*, and mix it with flour and sugar-candy, kneading it into small round cakes, for their own private consumption. Its nutritious qualities are quite proverbial throughout the East. In the book of Exodus we read—

“ And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, it is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, this is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.

* These sherbets consist of various syrups mixed with water. Hasselquist says, that the violet is also used; and he adds, that when the Easterns intend to entertain their guests in an elegant manner, their sherbet is made of a solution of violet-sugar. Ice brought from the mountains is a constant ingredient.

“ This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded; gather of it every man according to his eating, an omer for every man, according to the number of your persons; take ye every man for them which are in his tents.

“ And the children of Israel did so; and gathered some more, some less.

“ And they gathered it every morning, every man according to his eating; and when the sun waxed hot, it melted.

“ And the house of Israel called the name thereof manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

“ And the children of Israel did eat manna forty years, until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna, until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan*.”

* Exodus, chap. xvi. v. 15, 16, 17, 21, 31, 35.

CHAPTER XIII.

People of Soolimaniah—Koordiah Hospitality—Travelling in the East—Koordish Costume—Female Head-dress—Koordish Women—Use of the Veil—Tinging the Eye-brows—Painting the Eye-lids—Tinting the Finger-nails—Taste in Beauty—Houses in Soolimaniah—Habits of the Koords—Ancient Custom—Religion of the Yezidees—Roostam Agha—His Importunity—Scotch Shawls—Locusts.

HAVING an introductory letter from the prince royal of Persia, to the pasha of Koordistaun, he immediately ordered a house for our accommodation in the best quarter of Soolimaniah, where we found the people extremely civil and obliging. Indeed, they pride themselves on hospitality; but how its duties are discharged, depend entirely upon circumstances. In the summer of 1828, I adopted the Turkish dress, wore a long beard, and passed through the heart of this country accompanied by a Koord, and an Osmanlee, who pretended to be a lineal descendant of the prophet, and who was a man of unusual information for his country. We

travelled together a distance of seven or eight hundred miles without spending a bajoglee*. The Osmanlee actually assured me the people pushed their hospitality to such an extent, that he was offered a bride at every village we passed through; "but," added he, "as I was your mehmaundar, I could not indulge myself so much, though the offer was difficult to forego." Notwithstanding his age was upwards of three score years, he had taken advantage of the utmost latitude of the Mahomedan law, and, in addition to his four wives at Baghdad, he had so judiciously distributed others at every town between that city and Tabriz, that he seldom slept from home. The Osmanlee's name was Ishmael—by profession he was a messenger—had often served British travellers, and certainly, if I might judge from the testimonials he had in his possession, had given them infinite satisfaction. On this journey I did not disguise myself, but retained the English costume; consequently, I found travelling here much

* A Dutch ducat.

more expensive than either in Turkey or Persia. Any sum under four or five hundred pounds per annum is quite insufficient. A man may scramble at the risk of his life through this or any other Eastern country on a mere pittance, but to travel for information, and to pass in security, and without any great molestation, the above sum is indispensably necessary. I strongly advise all travellers who propose to visit Koordistaun, to wear their own dress, for then their persons will be held sacred; whereas, should they adopt a foreign garb, although far greater opportunities would, doubtless, be afforded them for observing the country and its people, they might be knocked on the head for the value of a decent pair of "shulwars" (unmentionables). When I first journeyed through Koordistaun, we had some very disagreeable rencontres, but on the present tour I felt more secure than if we were travelling through most parts of Ireland. It is not, however, always safe to trust to the strongest professions, for there is no doubt that cruelty

and avarice characterise the Koords, though they by no means hoard their money, but prefer converting it into horses, mares, matchlocks, pistols, lances, and ornaments for their women. Cash is not current amongst them, except in large towns. We found it difficult to get change even for a tomaun.

The gay and gaudy hues of the Koordish costume are singularly striking and picturesque. They combine a mixture of the Turkish with the native habit. The chief characteristic which pertains to the latter, is a thick red felt skull-cap, drawn close to the forehead, and hanging down as far as the back of the neck, like a long bag. A silken tassel, generally of blue, is attached to its point, and a shawl of the same material, with red and yellow stripes, is wound round the cap and encircles the head of the wearer. This shawl has long knotted cords ending in a variegated fringe, which hangs on both sides of the neck, and floats over the shoulders. The outer robe, or "joobbah," is made precisely after the Turkish fashion,

of rich Damascus striped satin, buttoned close round the neck, and reaching as low as the instep. This cloak is confined near the waist, by a strong leathern girdle, which is ornamented with embossed studs of silver, and fastened by a clasp of the same workmanship and material. Within this belt a rich jowhar, or water-bladed dagger is concealed. Its ivory handle is the only part seen. Very wide stamboul "shulwars," are worn bulging over the ankle, and terminating by a pair of red or yellow hessian boots with pointed toes. Neither stockings nor socks are ever worn. In winter the cloak or abbah is always used. Its material is of woollen twist, about the thickness of our own patent Mackintoshes, and generally ornamented with a long stripe of gold thread, extending from the left shoulder to the back. The men (with the exception of those who travel into Turkey and Persia) never shave their heads, and always allow the beard and moustaches to attain a great length.

The women dress in much the same style

as the men, and, like their sex every where else, are very fond of personal ornaments; they accordingly sport a profusion of gold and silver coins, which are always of great value and antiquity, and which adorn their head-dress. This was decidedly the most extraordinary *coiffure* we had ever seen: it consisted of a wicker frame thickly padded over, fitting tight to the head, and covered with chintz of the gayest colours. Its shape is shewn by the subjoined sketch. .



Some of the head-dresses were studded with artificial flowers, feathers, and tinsel; others had merely a shawl tied round them, with the ends hanging down the back. Over the forehead, the hair of the wearer is cut short; but a ringlet hangs down on each side of the face. The *crown* ornaments are sometimes mixed with engraved gems, and even most valuable antique cameos have been seen hanging therefrom. M. Raymond, an officer of artillery in the service of his highness the pasha of Baghdad, assured me that one of his brother officers, also in the service of the Baghdad government, had once met with a beautiful cameo on the forehead of a Koordish damsel, from whom he purchased it, and sent it as a present to Napoleon Bonaparte.

The women of this country are neither immured within the harem walls, nor compelled to wear the head or face-veil; and, as regards freedom of speech and action, they are on a perfect equality with the ladies of Europe.

On entering the house of a Koord, you

are not annoyed by the females rushing in every direction to escape notice. During our stay amongst them, we invariably met them unveiled, even when in the presence of the other sex. When they paid a visit to my lady, they expressed no wish that I should withdraw, on the contrary, they preferred my being present. It is not the etiquette of the country that they should dine with their lords, neither is it customary to ask after the health of a man's wife, but to say, as they do in Arabia, "How is your house?" But in every other respect they enjoy perfect liberty.

It is exceedingly remarkable that, of all the numerous Oriental tribes, the Koordish women only (the Toorkomaun and Illyaut are from the same stock) should have preserved amongst themselves this *really* modest and primitive custom. Scriptural passages warrant the assertion, that in the earliest ages of the world, courtesans only wore the face-veil, to avoid, perhaps, the disgrace of being recognised in public. We read thus

in the first book of Moses, of Tamar deceiving Judah.

“ And she put her widow’s garments off from her, and covered her with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife.

“ When Judah saw her, he thought her *to be* an harlot; *because she had covered her face**.”

As far as my own observation extended, the Koordish women were not half so good-looking as their husbands; nor did they possess those personal charms which might impose the necessity of much restraint, though the young girls, if dressed up in the Parisian fashion, would be considered pretty brunettes. They tinge the eyebrows with a paste, called in the Arabic, “ Khattat.” The eyes are painted with the “ Kahel,” and the lashes darkened with a sharp-pointed needle

* Genesis, chap. xxxviii. v. 14, 15.

or bodkin, which is passed beneath the lids. The angles of the eyes are also tinged, to make them appear unnaturally large. Moore, in his *Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, thus alludes to it:—

“They mix the Kohol’s jetty dye,
To give that long dark languish to the eye.”

The Egyptian as well as the Koordish ladies resort to the same arts of the toilette.

This Eastern custom of painting the eye-lids is of very great antiquity: it certainly communicates to the eye, particularly when seen by candle-light, a languor so tender and fascinating, that no language is competent to express it. Hence the epithet *ἰοβλέφαρος*, violet-coloured eye-lids, attributed by the Greeks to the Goddess of Beauty; and the Arabian comparison of “the eye-lids of a fine woman bathed in tears, to violets dropping with dew.” Perhaps, also, Shakspeare’s

“Violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno’s eyes,”

should be referred to the same origin. Both Homer and Hesiod have applied 'ΕΛΙΚΟ-ΒΛΕΦΑΡΟΣ to Venus in a synonymous sense, as is evident from Pliny, who, amongst other properties of the helix, minutely specifies its purplish flowers. This *ὑπογραφὴ ὀφθαλμῶν* will likewise explain 'ΕΛΙΚΩΠΙΣ. Wincklemann has given a different interpretation; but let him speak for himself:—" 'Ελικο-βλέφαρος caractérise des yeux dont les paupières ont un mouvement d'ondulation que le poète compare au jeune cep de la vigne*." Anacreon has alluded to the same cosmetic, when he required of the painter, that the eye-lids of his mistress's portrait, should, like her own, exhibit this appearance:—

'Εχέτω δ', ὅπως ἐκείνη,
ΒΛΕΦΑΡΩΝ 'ΙΤΤΝ ΚΕΛΑΙΝΗΝ·

and her eye, both the bright citron of Minerva's, and the dewy radiance of Cytherea's:—

* Hist. de l'Art de l'Antiq. tom. i. p. 460, ed. 4to.

Τὸ δὲ ΒΛΕΜΜΑ νῦν ἀληθῶς

Ἄπὸ τοῦ πυρὸς πόλῃσον.

Ἄμα ΓΛΑΥΚΟΝ, ὥς ἈΘΗΝΗΣ·

Ἄμα δ' ὕΤΡΟΝ, ὥς ΚΥΘΗΡΗΣ*.

Another Mahommedan fashion equally essential to Koordish beauty, requires that the nails of the fingers and feet should be tinted with the auburn-coloured juice of the henna tree†:—

“ Some bring leaves of henna, to imbue,
The fingers' ends with a bright roseate hue,
So bright, that in the mirror's depth they seem
Like tips of coral branches in the stream.”

Marriage is not so early contracted here as in most other parts of the East. A plurality of wives is allowed by law, but not much encouraged by the fair sex; who here, no less than in Europe, are prone to jealousy. So far as we could observe, there prevailed a strong mutual attachment between hus-

* Ode xxviii. 18.

† The Persians dye the backs of their horses with this red juice, as they consider that it prevents the saddle from galling them.

band and wife, and we were assured that their parental affection was extreme.

The Koords, like all other nations, differ in their taste regarding the fair sex: with them, as with the Turks, a redundant plumpness is sought after and honoured, and is considered the greatest trait of beauty. It is natural enough, therefore, for the ladies to vie with each other in acquiring a superiority in this particular; they accordingly eat all kinds of sweetmeats, dried and candied fruits, hulwah*, manna, and several other vegetable substances grated down to a powder, in order that they may attain the utmost amplitude of Koordish ideas. A Koordish chieftain, after describing to me the beauty of his intended bride, as the colour of a thousand flowers, and her charms as the perfume which exhales from the “attar-gul,” said, with the utmost seriousness, “She is as large, Sir, as an elephant!” He considered this comparison the very acme

* A conserve composed of flour, sugar, butter or sweet oil, and pounded almonds.

of perfection*. A regulation girdle would be quite superfluous in this country to measure the ladies' waists, though Kempfer mentions an officer among the suite of the shah of Persia, whose duty it was at stated periods to measure the beautiful forms of the ladies of the harem, and if any of them exceeded the regulated size, they were instantly placed on "short commons." Kempfer calls this "holder of the girdle," *formæ corporis æstimator*.

The houses in Soolimaniah are, as I have already remarked, very meanly built—they are low and dark, having at most two or three small pigeon-holes, miscalled windows: in fact, the generality of them are little better than large-sized huts with flat roofs. In general the shape is that of an oblong square, the roof and flooring are plastered with mud, and the sides composed of sun-

* Solomon has compared his bride to "a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots;" Sophocles, a delicate virgin to a wild heifer; and Horace, a sportive young female to an untamed filly: but the Koord's comparison surpasses them all.

dried bricks, mixed up with chopped straw. A partition divides the houses into two or more rooms, the inner ones being private, the outer open to all visitors. They contain scarcely any furniture beyond the usual nummud of felt placed along the sides of the ante-room.

The people are habitually abstemious, subsisting on the coarsest bread and manna, which latter they use instead of sugar; and when meat is introduced at their meals, it has seldom undergone any further culinary preparation than that of boiling in plain water. They are extremely dirty in their habits, and in this particular cannot be compared either to the Turks or the Persians. Their occasional ablutions do not remove the evils attendant on the length of time they wear their clothes. In fact, they scarcely ever change, but permit their garments to drop piecemeal from their bodies. As regards cleanliness, no Asiatic can bear a comparison with the European. Even the Hindoo, so extolled by most people

for his extreme personal cleanliness, is, perhaps, the filthiest animal of the creation.

Although the Koords practise circumcision, like the followers of Mahommed, they do not insist upon the operation being indispensable; indeed, in Persia even, many noblemen assured me, that, should a convert to Islamism have passed the age of puberty, the operation would be dispensed with, if strongly objected to. The Arabs declare it was adopted as a preventive against a certain disorder. This ancient custom appears to have been borrowed by Moses from the Egyptians, since it was common to the Egyptians and Phoenicians. It is very singular that this rite was also performed by some American aborigines. Herodotus, Diodorus Siculus, Strabo, and others, bear testimony to the antiquity of this custom, which was practised not only by the Hebrews, but also by the Idumeans and Ishmaelites.

The language spoken at Soolimaniah is a mixture of Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and

even Hindoostanee. The people *profess* the religion of Mahommed, but know nothing whatever of its doctrine. Some of them are called "Yezideeah;" but this is a distinct nomadic tribe, living chiefly by themselves, and ranging the whole country between this city and Merdin. These people have a religion in which they do homage to his satanic majesty, as a prince and servant of the Most High God; and, unlike the Mahommedans, they are by no means tenacious of the chastity of their wives and daughters. They maintain that, as the devil exerts great sway on earth, he ought to be treated with every respect, and as they wish to make friends wherever they go, they divide their homage between the powers of light and those of darkness. They lead a pastoral and predatory life, and are, proverbially, the most daring robbers in all Koordistaun. Monsieur Febvier, in his *Travels*, gives an extraordinary account of this sect as they existed in his time. Their numbers consisted of two hundred thousand, scattered throughout Persia, Turkey, and

Koordistaun. They spoke the Koordish language, were fierce in war, but very hospitable when approached in their own tents: "a bread and salt traitor" was unknown amongst them. They were armed with bows and arrows, and, in the use of the sling, they exhibited the most surprising dexterity.

During our stay at Soolimaniah, we were visited by one Roostam Agha, a Yezidee. He was a man of middle height, robust figure, and had a slight stoop in the shoulders. His countenance was charged with a sinister expression, something between a sneer and a smile. His features were not handsome, the nose being heavy and clubbed, and the lips coarse and thick, but his complexion, although dark, was remarkable for its freshness of tint. He wore short moustaches, carefully combed upwards from the lips, and a beard *à la royale* tufted his chin. He pretended he had met us here before, and teased me so much to give him a shawl from "Frangistaun," that I heartily wished him at the tomb of his patron saint Scheikh Addi,

or at the devil. To his modest request, I said I had nothing with me except a few changes of linen, or I should have been happy to meet his wishes. He then took up a brace of pistols, which I carried in the holsters of my saddle, and eyed them with peculiar complacency. He was not long in asking for them also; but I refused to part with my fire-arms until we were clear out of Koordistaun. I, however, gave him a sword which belonged to our Meerza, on a promise to the latter of another of equal value, when we might reach Bagdad. The agha appeared disappointed, and declared he would rather have had a shawl; perhaps he calculated on receiving both sword and shawl. But the Easterns are like children, and always covet that which is withheld from them. Thus the agha was less pleased with the sword I gave him, than with the shawl I withheld from him. It is worth mentioning, that we have brought the manufacture of our shawls (the Scotch especially) to such an extreme de-

gree of perfection, that they are exceedingly prized by all the people of these countries. We bought several, previously to our quitting London, of Everington and Graham, for Dr. Cormick, who presented them at Tabriz to the prince royal of Persia, in whose numerous harems* a very unladylike scramble took place for their possession. As articles of trade, however, none would answer except the commonest patterns, for the prices they hold, even in England, are too high for either the Turkish or Persian markets.

The day before our departure from Soolimaniah, a strong southerly wind set in, and brought with it such myriads of locusts, that the air was literally darkened with them. The "royahs," or peasants, kept up a continued howling to prevent them from settling on

* When I was last in Azerbijaun, Abbas Mirza's several wives had each of them their distinct and separate establishments, to which were attached innumerable Georgian and Circassian girls, who were neither single nor married.

the cultivated tracts. The women and children rushed out of the city, and “ bagged them ” as articles of provision. Locusts are considered a great luxury in this country, and are hoarded up for feast days. They prepare them by first tearing off their legs and wings, immersing them for a short time in hot water, and then drying them in the sun, and sticking them on thin bamboo skewers, frying them as they do kabobs, with pepper and salt, and, when thus prepared, their taste is not much inferior to or unlike dried prawns. In this way they keep for any length of time, and are always sold by measure.

END OF VOL. I.

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